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ABSTRACT

This volume contains articles about writing, best practice, portfolio assessment, and technology, as well as original poetry and book reviews. Articles in the volume are: "Teaching Writing: Making Connections" (Eric Schott); "Empowering Teachers: A Success Story" (Sandra L. Krivak); "Bridging the Gap between the Classroom and Employment" (Linda C. Wojnar); "Using Teaching Theories and Strategies in the Real World" (Jeri A. Simon); "A Whole Language Approach to the Science Classroom" (Bonnie Book); "Middle School Students Write Quatrains" (Marlow Ediger); "When Will I Ever Use This Stuff?" (Laura J. Steinig); "There Is More Than One Way of Teaching" (Robert Wagner); "The Course Portfolio: Documenting Scholarship" (Deborah J. Kennedy); "The Benefits of Keeping a Teaching Portfolio" (Antonio S. Caruso); "Quality or Quantity? That Is the Question" (Lisa C. Schonberger); "Incorporating Technology into the Core Classroom" (Jean L. Schulte); and "Online Teaching: Interviews with Professional Educators" (Mark Rescher). (NKA)

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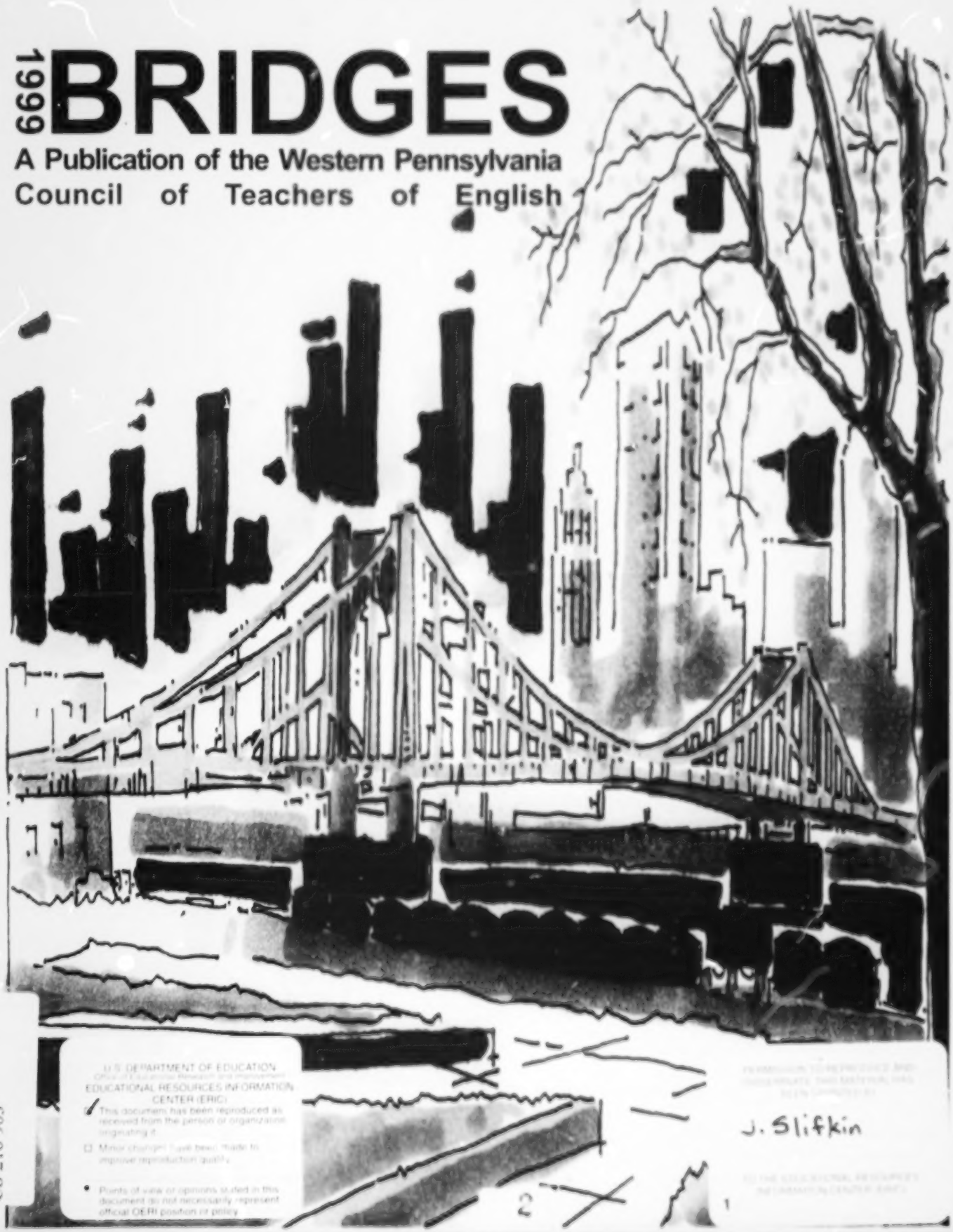

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From the Editors... Integrating Literacies

Today's teachers can provide much more than a basic education of others' thoughts and words. It is not enough to live by E. D. Hirsch's call for a cultural literacy, a set listing of things everyone should know. Instead, students need opportunities to be reflective readers, determined researchers, technological experts, critical thinkers, and persuasive writers. In short, students can become active participants in their own learning, if we model the transformative power of being critically literate.

Teachers searching for better ways to provide students with the means to create new knowledge and improve upon their prior thinking can facilitate the process by helping students extend their own critical literacy.

Critically literate teachers are active learners. They respond with higher order thinking skills, reflect on their own experiences, and incorporate that experiential learning throughout their education. To be critically literate is to be aware of how one's thinking changes or moves to a different level. Critically literate teachers do not just write, they write to learn. They do not merely read; they reflect for deeper meaning. Critically literate learners not only speak, but also speak with purpose and thoughtfulness. Teachers who provide a means toward critical literacy in their classrooms are agents of change. They transfer this power of active thinking and doing to their students.

With the advent of the Internet and multimedia in the classroom, teachers must possess a level of technological literacy. This means that teachers must be able to infuse this technology into their curriculum. From simple word processing and presentation skills to complex web authoring and page layout programs, teachers can provide students with a palette of learning opportunities in their classrooms.

Technological literacy can and should work together with the traditional literacies of reading, writing, interacting, thinking, demonstrating, and viewing. Integrating literacies is essential to learning. The ways we approach learning are just important as what we learn. Helping students to understand their own literacies and how they have transformed their thinking and learning is essential. Critical literacy must be actively taught for transfer to occur.

Reading is one way to gain new knowledge and new perspectives, whether the texts are compendiums of basic skills and teaching strategies, individual texts on innovative approaches, or handouts from professional journals, new information and new ideas must be explored.

Formal writing is a capstone experience in which reading, interacting, viewing, and demonstrating come together. Thinking has been defended, refined, and presented. Prior knowledge has been assessed, new knowledge has been integrated, and current knowledge can be documented.

Informal writing leads to connections and extensions that are almost automatic. An academic thinking journal is good place to keep booknotes, reader responses, personal reflections, and reactions from others to stretch our thinking.

Interacting with others in small groups, justifying the way we think, and articulating our ideas helps us to become better thinkers. Visual texts offer unlimited opportunities to present information in a variety of ways, such as maps, graphs, and diagrams. Electronic media has increased the demand for top-notch visual literacy skills.

If we share and model how we learn, we can invite students to share and model how they learn, to engage them in an ongoing thinking process. When we integrate these literacies into daily lesson plans, unit plans, and the overall curriculum, we will help students to become more critically literate thinkers and doers.

We at *Bridges* are happy to present an issue filled with many progressive ideas on improving literacies. The authors in this volume have written about writing, best practice, portfolio assessment, technology, as well as original poetry and reviews of recent educational books. Literacy is a complex web of thought and action. *Bridges* is one conduit into that web.

Josh M. Slifkin Bonita Wilcox

Teaching Writing: Making Connections

Eric Schott

My athletic dreams died early thanks to knee injuries in 8th and 9th grade. I became a volunteer assistant basketball coach at the ripe old age of 15. After each season with the 7th and 8th grade team at St. Malachy School, at least one parent would come up to me, thanking me for helping their son, and say, "You should become a teacher." I would smile and thank the parent, who always made their statement in a complimentary tone, as I thought to myself, "A teacher? I don't think so."

My strength in high school was writing. I didn't really love to write, but I knew I was good at it. I worked on the school newspaper for two years, holding the position of editor-in-chief my senior year. I grew to love writing. Journalism was my field, sports reporting to be exact. I would read the local sports pages and know I could write just as well, if not better, than the writers I was reading. After four years of journalism school and an oppressive job market, I thought to myself, "A teacher? Let's try it."

I've never received a telegram from God telling me so, but I now know that those parents from St. Malachy were right. I know some people that say I wasted close to five years of my life in journalism school, but I believe that those years of training give me an advantage over other beginning English teachers who were simply education majors. As writing receives more emphasis in the English classroom, I know my appreciation for the complexities of writing will help me to enhance the writing of my students.

This isn't LA Law

My junior year in college was my first full year at *The Post*. My first assigned beat that year was the football team. I figured that entailed covering the games, coaches press conferences, and writing feature stories on players, but I never would have guessed I would be assigned to a story involving a major lawsuit. Nonetheless, I was assigned to dig into what we called the Shamrock Scandal. Very briefly, the university I attended and another had agreed to play a football game overseas. The promoter got everything set up and then asked each university for additional money over the agreed price to make the trip happen. Multi-million dollar lawsuits were filled and that's where I entered the picture.

When the story was assigned, I was given a large envelope containing copies of all the legal papers that had been filed. I did the best I could in deciphering the legal terminology and started making phone calls. After seemingly endless hours of work, the story was published on the front page and I was chosen to receive an award for the story, but neither the lawsuit or the story is the main point here. The process of getting the story to its award-winning form is.

As I have already stated, lots of work, mostly phone calls and research, went into that story. When I turned in the article for the first time, I thought it was pretty good. The final article did not run in the paper for another three weeks.

I found the first copy returned in my mailbox the following day with marks correcting everything from ideas to structure to grammar. It was the first time I had ever received a piece of writing from someone who hadn't said, "Just make a couple of minor corrections and this will be good." Instead the impression I got from the seemingly blood-stained paper in my mailbox was, "This needs a lot of work before it runs in the paper." My initial reaction was defensive, but as I looked at the article later it did need some help. I went through this revision/editing process with the sports editor and editor-in-chief three or four more times. Eventually the piece made the front page, but only after a lot of frustration, aggravation and self-doubt on my part.

"Ripped"

I was not reminded of the preceding story until I had an experience in my field observation. I was given the opportunity by my field-site teacher to do my own creative writing lessons. I came up with,

what I thought were, some fun activities for the class.

Everything went well with my week of lessons in the creative writing class and I was pretty impressed with myself. The teacher also gave me the latitude to collect and grade the papers. The only students who did not get good grades were the ones who did not hand the assignment in to me. Less than a year later, I ran into one of the students in that class and she remarked, "You really ripped that creative writing paper I wrote." To this day I do not remember the girl's paper or what I could have written on it, but she continued, "I thought it was pretty good 'til you handed it back." After some more discussion I learned the paper was a high B and that I had written I liked the idea, but too many grammar mistakes interfered with the flow. While I know I did not "rip" this student's paper, it reminded me of how I felt when I got the first copy of my Shamrock story back.

As an assistant editor while in college, my job was not to build up the self-esteem of the writers on my staff because they should already be good writers. My job was to point out the mistakes they made which were usually careless grammar mistakes. I learned, just from reading some of the creative writing papers I received, that is not the case in high school. Even the students on the high school newspaper are not all good writers. Now when I get the chance to read high school writing, even my sister's who thinks she has it made with a brother who was a newspaper editor, I have to make sure I'm in the right frame of mind: high school kids writing are not college newspaper reporters.

Quality not Quantity

One thing I have learned about high school writing is that kids react in a positive way when they are told they have good ideas (quality) that need worked on instead of being told they have too many mistakes (quantity). Writing, no matter what kind, is a very personal thing. No matter what the subject, writing comes from one person and, if it is poor, can not be pushed off on anyone else. Thus when criticism is made, the first response is usually defensive, like I had with my Shamrock story.

Writing takes time and effort, and thus some sort of bond is created between the author and the work. It took a while for me to adjust to take criticism for what I wrote in the newspaper. My audience was so general, I never knew what to expect. When criticism came, my first reaction was defensive. I learned that the best way to combat that was to write stuff I believed in and to be comfortable with my own writing. My writing never changed, but my attitude toward my writing did. I was no longer writing something for just a teacher to read, but I was writing for a massive unknown audience. Believing in what I wrote and feeling comfortable with it added life to my writing because I knew I might have to defend or explain it to someone.

Of course the easiest way to get kids to feel more comfortable with their writing is to have them write. Have them write a lot. When it comes to correcting a piece of writing, focus on the positives first.

How does this relate to high school writing? Well, as I started to mention earlier, it is easy to get kids to believe they aren't good writers. Most kids do not believe they are good writers to start with, and any negative comments about their writing just reinforces the belief they aren't good writers. The way to combat this can be easy, but it can also be torture for some grammar sticklers. Of course the easiest way to get kids to feel more comfortable with their writing is to have them write. Have them write a lot. When it comes to correcting a piece of writing, focus on the positives first. Build some confidence in the student. A paper with red marks all over it can shatter what is probably fragile confidence. With confidence, writers may muster enough courage to experiment with different styles or different words that they would not normally use. A confident writer is one who has a lot of potential.

I hope grammarians have not skipped the rest of this article. In no way am I advocating the phasing out of grammar. Good grammar is essential to good writing, but one has to remember that writing is a process; it takes time. A student can not be expected to fix all of the mistakes in his/her writing after one paper. If they are bombarded with correction marks

and ideas, they may be overwhelmed. First a student should be told what his/her strengths are, but also must be notified as to the areas of his/her writing that need to be worked on. If a student has good ideas in a piece of writing, but has some grammar problems, would the student respond better to compliments on the ideas with the suggestion of looking at certain grammar areas, or would the student respond better to criticism or lack of grammar knowledge that limits the writing? Like I stated earlier, writing is a process. A good way to work through the process is to use portfolios in the classroom so students can go back and see where they are strong or weak and where they can improve. As a year goes along and students continue to improve and increase their comfort level with their own writing, peer evaluation groups could also be beneficial.

The personal nature of writing makes it a very touchy subject to deal with. It does not take much for students to convince themselves they are not good writers. It takes time, effort and patience from a teacher to nurture writers. As English teachers, we must realize the importance of writing and the importance of helping our students become better writers. To do this, we must realize that writing is a part of the student and it must be handled with care. If it is not handled with that care, it may die as quickly as my athletic dreams did.

ERIC SCHOTT teaches English and Journalism at Shaler Area High School.

Empowering Teachers: A Success Story

Sandra L. Krivak

Imagine having the freedom to embrace and lead an initiative in your classroom, school or district. Now imagine that freedom coupled with the interest, excitement and support of your administrator. The following is the story of how a western Pennsylvania elementary school is living the teacher empowerment dream and much more.

The Administrative Team

It all began when enrollment at Sloan doubled and the need for additional leadership was imperative. The principal, Sam Shaneyfelt, and the teachers felt that another administrator would not fill this need. Therefore, Mr. Shaneyfelt began to explore options for both sides to benefit. After analyzing the job description of an assistant principal, Sam highlighted those roles that did not require certification and began to ponder how these tasks could be best completed. He envisioned teachers doing these tasks, presented his idea to the superintendent and school board and in no time, the Administrative Team was established. This team, made up of five teachers, represents all facets of the school. Individually, they are all strong teacher leaders, yet they differ significantly in learning style. Together this "A" Team represents the most well rounded assistant services any principal and staff would desire. Teachers now took these leadership rolls beyond the classroom.

Professional Development

Imagine you not only help to decide what professional development opportunities are scheduled during in-service days, but you also have the opportunity to lead or identify leaders for these sessions. When the Franklin Regional School District's teaching and administrative staff desire to investigate educational initiatives such as a new approach to the teaching of spelling or an inquiry based approach to science instruction, the teachers are given the lead. Supported by administration, teachers research, review, and select resources. These teams then rewrite the curriculum and lead in the inservicing of the staff. Next year, the teachers leading the math and science collaborative will publish a monthly district newsletter that will focus on issues identified as needs by the staff. In addition, they will provide support for new initiatives such as authentic assessment.

At the building level, teachers took extensive use of the initiative to identify their personal needs in computer training. The process began with a simple needs survey. The computer teacher, often assisted by teacher volunteers, led mini-training sessions before the start of the school day on topics such as creating web pages and using the Internet in the classroom. This year teams of teachers even lead the use of whiteboard technology to facilitate their students' Hyperstudio presentations. With all of this leadership activity one may wonder how the principal can be the sole evaluator of the staff.

Throughout the year, the teachers and principal reflect on their growth. This reflection is driven by a rubric that sets expectations based upon the descriptors of the state evaluation form. Specific activities are described that represent actions that exceed expectations, meet them, or show need of minor or major improvements.

Teachers supervising teachers? Over the past two years, teachers have collaborated and taken responsibility for their own growth by using Peer Observations/Coaching. Voluntarily, teachers engage in mini-training sessions led by an administrative team leader on the peer observation process. Throughout the year, pairs of teachers arrange peer observations that involve a pre-conference, written observation and post conference. Their experiences are concluded

in a mini-conference with the principal where both teachers reflect upon the lesson. These experiences often grew into cross grade level partnerships for the year in which on-going projects occur between the two teachers' students.

These team projects are most often planned and discussed during BEST time. BEST time is another district initiative created by the superintendent, Dr. Lee Rieck and adopted by the bargaining unit. The ultimate purpose is the improvement of the learning environment for students through teacher collaboration in building based instructional decision-making. BEST time is broken into four essential components:

> **Building** refers to the school site at which the activity of planning for student growth occurs.
>
> **Enrichment** refers to the addition of some desirable quality attribute or plan to our present program.
>
> **Students** are the beneficiaries of the cooperative effort.
>
> **Triad** shows at minimum the involvement of three groups to promote growth opportunities: Board of School Directors, Building Staff and Administrators.

Through this collaborative activity, teachers give an additional one-hour each school week to engage in the development of enrichment activities. At that time, administrators work with the staff cooperatively to develop BEST building goals, establish personal BEST goals and serve as resources. Now you may still think that evaluation of teachers is solely the job of the principal. Not any more.

Through the cooperative effort by the teachers' union and administration, a new teacher evaluation plan has been established. The focus of the plan for tenured teachers is promoting personal and professional growth. Teachers are no longer passive recipients of evaluations. They create growth options with and communicate progress to the administrator. Throughout the year, the teachers and principal reflect on their growth. This reflection is driven by a rubric that sets expectations based upon the descriptors of the state evaluation form. Specific activities are described that represent actions that exceed expectations, meet them, or show need of minor or major improvements.

Student Development

You may still ask, "But what is this doing to improve the development of the student learner?" Well, once the teachers began to lead their own professional development, all types of unique and exemplary student centered activities began to take shape.

Picture 800 students strewn across the floors of the hallways, classrooms, gymnasium and cafeteria and barely a teacher in sight. Chaos, you may say. No! You are simply witnessing a Sloan School Multiple Intelligence Whole School Activity Day. Putting a new twist to Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences, the staff at Sloan has cooperatively grouped all of its students into 115 teams of six students each, one from each grade level, one through six. These students are randomly teamed and come together to work through theme activities revolving around Gardner's identified intelligences. During a MI day, which occurs at least three times per year, you may enter our large group instruction room on a December day and witness students skiing on lunch trays across the carpeted floors. They are not discipline problems. They are simply timing relay races as they work in the bodily/kinesthetic intelligence.

After learning about an artist or era in art history and creating original works in the art room, students in each grade level take their knowledge to the computer lab, where they use programs such as Tessellmania and Aldus Super Paint to create amazing paintings.

Other student centered activities that have been conceptualized, created and lead by teachers include

Family "Mind" Game Night and After School Kids Clubs and school-wide Reading Challenges. Multitudes of cross grade level teaming projects have also emerged. Examples include community service through food drives and work with nursing home patients. These teacher and student teams are also often learning partners participating in joint lessons where curriculums address similar concepts. Second and fourth graders build circuits in science and complete journal entries about their work while fifth and first graders work through the writing process together reading and editing stories. Special area teachers are also teaming to enrich and integrate the curriculum.

A unique cross special subject partnership termed "Techno-Art" has received state recognition and has become the norm in which our students create works of art. After learning about an artist or era in art history and creating original works in the art room, students in each grade level take their knowledge to the computer lab, where they use programs such as Tessellmania and Aldus Super Paint to create amazing paintings.

Empowerment is happening! Teachers are not only embracing the concept but also running with the opportunity to take leadership roles in the school. This leadership not only heightens the professional development process but also positively affects the entire school climate. Teachers, students and parents alike consistently acknowledge the improved school climate. There are also improved feelings of self-efficacy in all. Risk taking is embraced and successes as well as failures are openly shared for reflection. Teachers and students are no longer the recipients of change; they are agents of change.

Now you may ask, "How can I facilitate teacher empowerment in my school. The answer is simple. You can accomplish this collegiality and shared leadership in your school by simply leading in the following way:

1. Provide the opportunity for teachers to take leadership roles.
2. Welcome risk taking and the sharing of experiences.
3. Generate excitement for teacher initiated projects.
4. Link the staff to resources, both material and personal.
5. Communicate activities to key constituents: district administrators, school board members, parents, and community members.

And most importantly . . .

6. Recognize risk takers and celebrate successes!

SANDRA L. KRIVAK is Principal of Sloan Elementary School.

Bridging the Gap between the Classroom and Employment

Linda C. Wojnar

A useful way for college students in education to see the connection between content taught in a traditional course and useful application in the workplace involves asking community members, who use the topics or tools of interest on a regular basis, to speak to the students near the completion of the course. Teachers who want to link teaching and learning specific ideas, tools or concepts taught in the classroom with "best practices" modeled by the educators of their choice will benefit from this student-centered panel exercise.

This activity would be geared more to what the students would like to learn about and less to what the teacher thinks the class needs or wants. The students take the initiative to explore speakers in their areas of interest. All students in a group share their perspective speaker bio sheets and come to a consensus of the speaker(s) who will represent their group. The group is responsible for inviting the guest speaker, and informing the speakers of all of the details for the presentation. The ideal panel should consist of six speakers. By engaging students in this type of an activity, students may be more actively involved in class participation as evidenced by their use of higher order questioning of the panel members when they are involved in choosing the topics and the speakers. While the idea of asking the community to become involved in the classroom is not new, the exercise is a very effective way to encourage active participation.

My course covers many areas such as: journal writing, graphic organizers, oral questioning techniques (taking questions through all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy), multiple intelligences, use of visuals in the classroom, technology in the classroom, metacognition, peer assessment, and portfolios. Each topic in this curriculum offers a variety of tools teachers of all disciplines could use to reach students of every learning style and multiple intelligence, regardless of their age. The alternative assessments and evaluations encompass a deeper understanding of the way students think. Students show evidence of higher order thinking as they dialogue with texts, peers, and through a metacognitive approach to self-reflection.

Here is a sample of how this activity could be incorporated in a classroom:

Week 1

1. Explain the project to the class.
   a. Include the date, time, and specifics of the projects—expectations of the speakers, expectations of the students, and a timeline for students to follow in order to complete all of the steps of the project on time for the presentation.
   b. Ask students to review the syllabus for areas they would like to have community educators discuss and demonstrate practical application.
   c. Students will discuss their ideas at the beginning of class next week.
2. Since it is ideal to have six panelists for diversity of expertise, the teacher may also invite a guest if necessary.

Week 2

1. Ask the class to verbalize topics of interest for community educators to present in relationship with the syllabus.
   a. Write the student responses on the board for the entire class to view.
   b. Once all of the ideas are on the board, ask for a show of hands of the number of students interested in each topic.
   c. Divide the class into smaller groups of 3-5 students according to commonalities in their shared areas of interest.
2. Explain to the class that they should recruit teachers who are enthusiastic about their topics, and who want to share their knowledge and lessons learned when using these tools or concepts. The speaker should be actively

involved with the use of the tool or concept, and value it for use with teaching and learning.

3. Mention that the speakers may be representatives of schools (any type or grade level including higher education), corporations (profit or non-profit sectors), military and medical fields.

Suggestion:

If all of the speakers are representatives of the same working environment, for example schools, then try to vary the school districts and grade levels for panel diversity. Students should try to choose a fair, multicultural representation of panelists, when possible, with regards to sex, race, and ethnic backgrounds in order to demonstrate diversity in the educational population, and support students of all classroom compositions.

Notes to the Speaker

1. **Time of the presentation**: 8-10 minutes
2. **Content**: Application and demonstration of an instructional technique, concept or tool selected from within the course curriculum used in your field of expertise.
3. **Total time you may be asked to remain on the panel**: Approximately one and a half to two hours, until all speakers have delivered their presentations and the question and answer period is over.
4. **Use of technology for the presentation**: Certain technologies are available with advanced notice, but please be as specific as possible in your requests.
5. **Handouts and photocopying**: Panelists are encouraged to present a handout to the class. A vehicle for follow-up communication for questions once the presentation has been delivered should also be included on your handout or discussed in your presentation (i.e. email, phone number, address, etc.). Some students may not think of a question to ask until the class is over and they've had time to process the information they heard or viewed during the demonstration.
6. **Parking and map**: A student representative will provide you with a map of the building and location of the class. Parking stickers will be distributed to all panelists on the evening of the presentation. The parking stickers are only useful if you park in the Forbes Garage at Duquesne University.
7. **What to bring**: Your enthusiasm for your subject

Week 3

1. Students arrive to class with bio sheets for their suggested speaker.
   a. The bio sheets are shared among all members of the group.
   b. The group decides which speaker(s) to invite.
   c. The group also chooses an alternate speaker in the event the original speaker is unable to attend.
   d. The group decides which student will contact the speaker for confirmation before the next class, and report back to the group and the class.

A certificate of appreciation is a valuable gift for any speaker. Honoraria are dependent upon the department's budget.

Week 4

1. The group representative informs the class of his/her progress regarding the panel activity, and distributes one bio sheet of the panelist to each group including the teacher.
2. Speakers should be given an extra four weeks (one month) to prepare their lesson, handouts, or overheads if they desire to use them, and also to make accommodations in their schedule, if necessary.
3. Today the groups will decide the order of the panelists' presentation, so that there will be a smooth transition between introductions on the night of the panel.
4. Remind the class that a representative should meet his/her guest prior to class.

Suggestion to the Teacher or designated student:

On the evening of the presentation, be sure that all equipment requested is functional and is available in the room ready for the panelists before the speakers arrive.

A panelist student-centered activity takes a lot of pre-planning to set the activity up for success. Speakers should have ample time to prepare for the speaking engagement (if possible). If the groups carefully select the panelists, the students should see reinforcement of the classroom teaching and its connection to the workplace. And, if the panel members remain for the entire session, their comments and interactions will usually be complementary and dovetail on statements made by others on the panel. Sometimes the speakers become so engaged in the dialogues that they, too, begin asking questions of other panelists in order to receive a deeper understanding of the topics being discussed.

Week 8

1. Set up enough chairs in a semi-circle facing the class for the panelists.
2. Drinking water should be provided for the panelists prior to their presentations.
3. The names of all panelists should be written on the board to reflect where they are seated.
4. The classroom teacher will provide a general opening welcome to the guest speakers and to the class.
5. On the evening of the presentation, a representative from each group will initially introduce his/her guest, the topic, concept or tool, and the place of employment so that all guests will be formally introduced to the class and to each other.
6. Students should sit where they can have full view of each panelist.
7. The student representatives then begin to introduce each individual panelist presentation by offering a brief bio and pertinent information to his/her speaker, including the reason the group chose this particular speaker.
8. Once all guests have spoken, and the question and answer period is over, hand out the parking passes and any gifts of appreciation.
9. Remind students that a journal write reflecting their thinking and learning during from the presentations tonight will be due at the beginning of class next week.

Week 9

1. Collect the journal write due today from the previous week's panel presentation.
2. Ask students to share what they wrote in their journal from last week's presentation.

Week 15

1. Final class for the semester
2. Guests are invited back to dialogue with students who either didn't want to publicly ask their questions during the initial presentation or thought of other questions once the presentation was over after processing the information.

Teaching a useful college course on "best practice" is a very complex task. Instructors must always provide learning opportunities for their students. This exercise assists students in viewing practical application of course content in the workplace. For the student, this project can be a form a networking with the educators, and may create opportunities for future employment. For the speaker, this is a form of recognition and appreciation for their contribution to the educational environment. For the classroom teacher, seeing the engagement of the students with the panelists in an activity that the students created themselves, is one of the most rewarding exercises a teacher can offer as a student-centered activity. A carefully planned and well thought out activity is time consuming for the teacher, but the rewards of such an activity offers many benefits to the student and the teacher. Through a journal write to be handed in the week following the presentations, students can verbalize the connections made between the classroom and the working environment, and demonstrate their recognition of the value of this type of an activity. Once the teacher sees the results of the project, the extra time the teacher spent thinking and planning the exercise becomes time well spent. Because a deeper understanding of the topic, concept, or tool may have occurred as a result of the activity, the information provided may last much longer, and students, in turn, may take more time to plan thoughtful activities for their future students to bridge the gap between classroom teaching and learning to the working environment.

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Using Teaching Theories and Strategies in the Real World

Jeri A. Simon

By nature, I am somewhat cynical of theoretical ideas. I prefer practical things that I can see, hear and feel. As a graduate student at Duquesne, however, I have been studying educational theories for the past year. With each new strategy or method that I learn, I always have one question: does this stuff really work? I constantly wonder whether I will be able to apply these theories in the classroom, when I have real students with real questions and real time limitations. A few semesters back, Instructional Techniques instructors Linda Wojnar and Josh Slifkin allowed my fellow students and me to answer this question and satisfy my cynical mind.

Throughout the course, we discussed strategies involving journals, technology and graphic organizers, to name a few. Josh and Linda then presented us with an assignment: bring teachers and other professionals into the class to discuss the usefulness of these theories in the real world. At last, I would find out whether these theories had practical value. We worked in groups to select topics that we wanted to learn more about. Next, each group contacted someone in the teaching profession to give a short presentation on one of the topics to our class. On October 27, 1998, a number of professionals from the Pittsburgh area were kind enough to take time out of their busy schedules to participate in a panel discussion on these topics. Thanks to them, my classmates and I were able to find out whether the theories we've studied actually work in the real world.

Joseph Melcher, of theUniversity of Pittsburgh's Learning, Research and Development Center, shared his ideas on problem solving techniques and higher order thinking skills. Mr. Melcher showed us how to help students solve problems on their own. He explained a problem solving process that helped his students not only find solutions but also improve their critical thinking skills. Both practical and enlightening, Mr. Melcher's presentation validated the higher order thinking strategies that I've learned about in graduate education courses.

Michelle Louch, a high school English and History teacher at Vincentian Academy, discussed the use of journals in the classroom. Louch shared practical strategies on how to use journals. She explained that they often help with lesson planning, because they let her know when students are confused or when they are bored with particular topics and ready to move on. In addition, Louch explained that journals provide insight into students' thinking, especially those who are quiet and reserved. Louch explained how journals can work in real classroom situations.

Kathy Weaver talked to the class about SHACC, the Sheraden Homework and Computer Center, a hands-on example of how technology can be used to help students outside of the classroom. It is a non-profit organization that provides a safe place for students and parents to learn about and work with technology to further their educational and employment needs. SHACC provides a number of free programs and software, including word processing, resume writing, and SAT and GED preparations. Ms. Weaver showed the class how students can develop necessary computer skills and enhance their own learning outside of the traditional classroom.

Another technology speaker was Susan Roehrig, of the Franklin Regional School District, who discussed the use of calculators in the classroom. She dispelled myths about calculators, explaining that they are merely tools to enhance what the students already know. These tools allow students to solve complex problems and improve critical thinking skills. Ms. Roehrig showed the class how tools such as the calculator are used successfully in real classrooms.

Each presenter gave the class valuable information and insights into the uses of journals, problems solving techniques, technology and graphic organizers. They answered the question that I have asked since I started my master's program. They showed me that, yes; this stuff really does work!

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A Whole Language Approach to a Science Classroom

Bonnie Book

As a graduate education student, I have become quite familiar with the concept of a changing paradigm for teaching. There are many catch phrases and strategies about which I am learning. Cultural diversity, metacognition, cooperative learning, and interdisciplinary teaching are just a few. Whole language is another. While the literature I have read about whole language is exciting, I am having one problem with the information. It is not presented in a way that is relevant to my subject area of chemistry. If reading, writing, and discovering are the best ways of teaching, are they the best ways of teaching everything? I believe they are. I have adapted several strategies from my studies that I think fit the concept of whole language teaching in a science context. I hope that they are only the beginning of what I am yet to learn about teaching students through their own thinking.

One problem that I have noticed in science classrooms is the tendency to teach from parts to whole. This has only served to confuse students. Science deals with understanding the parts that make up our world. Students are familiar with our world. They would be more able to transfer this whole knowledge to parts than vice versa. Helping students to relate new knowledge to ideas or experiences with which they are familiar should do this. Instead, it is usually presented in strict relation unfamiliar scientific principles. For example, students are familiar with classifications in many different areas. They themselves are freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors. Students who are asked to participate in several familiar classification exercises are more likely to be confident in their tackling of the periodic table than those who are first introduced to many unknown names and properties are. Another strategy that could be used to help students identify familiar parts of new information is a story schema. Students can create a story about how atoms bond to make molecules or how a reaction proceeds. Although both of these are scientific events, they have similarities to students making friends, baking a cake, or building a model. The reader response strategy is another technique that could be used in a science classroom. Students can relate experiences of their own that sound like what they have read about in their text, articles from scientific magazines, science fiction articles, or newspaper articles about scientific events. Teachers might use students' written reactions to these readings as a basis for discussion that introduces new knowledge. Students who are given a chance to identify familiar things about new knowledge, then allowed to discover how the new knowledge relates to their experiences are bound to be more interested in and less intimidated by new material.

Students who are asked to participate in several familiar classification exercises are more likely to be confident in their tackling of the periodic table than those who are first introduced to many unknown names and properties.

Writing is an important aspect of a whole language classroom. It seems that to some there is no place in a science classroom for writing. I do not agree. Practicing scientists need to be able to write in order to present new results, acquire grants for research, and defend their theories. Students of science should also be given space to write. Freewriting is one method that could be used in science classrooms. Students could argue against or support a statement in their reading that struck them as interesting or confusing. For example, students studying nuclear energy could voice their opinions and concerns about the topic. This is a way to make the information more personal and less abstract to the students. Peer journals are another writing tool that could be very useful in a science classroom. Students may be more willing to confess concepts they are having trouble

with to peers in a dialogue journal than to a teacher in a class discussion. These journals could also allow students to discover new ways to remember terms or ideas and share them with their peers. For example, students asked to explain one trend in the periodic table in a peer journal would gain confidence about their understanding of that trend and receive a way to remember another one. This could give students of science more confidence with difficult material by realizing they are not the only ones having difficulty and by allowing them to teach and learn together.

Another way that a whole language approach can be important in a science classroom is through questioning. The study of science is about questioning our world. However, the studying of science usually entails right or wrong answers with no explanation. Teachers should ask open-ended questions that allow students to apply new knowledge rather than ask them questions that require memorizing correct terms. Answers need to include a rationale and some insight as to how they were derived. Wrong answers need to be explored for clues to correct answers. Much scientific knowledge is based upon other scientific knowledge. If the student only partially understands the underlying theory, the student will have problems down the road. It is hard to discern how much a student understands about "p orbital " if the only question they are asked about it is about its shape. Problem solving questions are especially vulnerable to partial error. When students show all of their work, they can locate and correct their errors, and the method is better understood. Another way of questioning that could be useful to students is review questions. Students who make up their own review questions allow the teacher to view what is understood by students, what is unclear, and at what level the information is being learned. For example, students who ask only review questions concerning vocabulary are probably not learning the material at the application level. These review questions could be used for the actual test, as a game for review, or as extra credit on the test. This allows the students to have input into their own assessment as well as their learning. Students will volunteer answers when teachers treat their work with respect and develop it into ideas.

Althougl a strict reading and writing workshop is not particularly practical for most science classes, students in all classes can benefit from exploring topics in relation to their own experiences and emotions. A whole language approach in a science classroom inspires confidence, lessens intimidation, personalizes learning, and allows students to perceive the relevance of their learning. With a little time and creativity, even a science classroom can allow students to participate in their own educational experience.

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Middle School Students Write Quatrains

Marlow Ediger

The writer has been a university supervisor of student teachers (ST) for approximately thirty years. An excellent ST taught the following lesson to pupils in the writing of quatrains. She leaned upon content that pupils had studied previously in a science unit on "Rocks and Minerals." The ST had pictures of igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks on the bulletin board with a neat caption entitled Rocks in our Environment. She reviewed with pupils how each of these rocks was formed. Next in sequence, she showed an appealing videotape on rock formation. Students were encouraged to ask questions pertaining to its contents. Here, pupils could touch, smell, and see each of the three categories of rocks. Yes, a pupil touched the top of a rock with his tongue to taste it. Several tried to hear sounds that a rock might make.

Students were asked to review the writing of couplets which had been completed two days ago. Seemingly, learners found rhyming words to be relatively easy to write. The next sequential step in teaching was to have learners write quatrains. There are several rhyme patterns in writing quatrains. The ST stressed in her lesson plan the writing of quatrains where lines one and two rhyme, as well as lines three and four rhyme. A previously written couplet was printed on the chalkboard and pupils were asked to add two more lines whereby the words at the end of these lines had rhyme. Sequentially, the quatrain and science content studied needed to be integrated by learners.

Large group instruction consisting of twenty-five pupils was used by the ST to write the first quatrain. Brainstorming for each of the parts of the quatrain was stressed. The following agreed upon quatrain resulted;

Rocks
Limestone rocks formed of sediment
May change to metamorphic with some impediment
Igneous rock came from molten lava and magma
After cooling, it did not fragment.

Writing a quatrain using large group instruction presented the following problems:

1. Individuals cannot contribute frequently enough.
2. Selected pupils are hesitant to contribute inside of a large group.
3. With many contributions made by pupils when brain storming, it becomes difficult to know whose contribution to accept for the quatrain.
4. A few pupils found it difficult to relate quatrain writing with the related subject matter previously studied.
5. Time on task was a problem for two pupils.

The ST then worked with a committee of five pupils in developing a quatrain. These learners wished to relate content from a social studies unit on "The Middle East Today," which was presently being studied. The ST reviewed a few major ideas from the Middle East unit with learners. The following quatrain resulted:

The Middle East
Struggling over land in place and time
Jews and Arabs want the Holy Land in rhyme.
Who will win the long debate?
Only time will tell its fate.

Small group work here was easier for the ST to manage. Learners were more motivated to present ideas for the quatrain, as compared to the class as a whole. Students appeared to be more relaxed when suggesting lines for the poem. The ST felt that learners enjoyed writing a group poem be it the class as a whole or within a committee.

Ample opportunities must be given to guide learners in writing poetry within the framework of group endeavors. Enjoyment of learning opportunities is a major objective of instruction. Creative writing should receive much emphasis in the curriculum. Seemingly, life in society requires creative behavior

of all. Ready-made answers to problems do not exist. The creative mind with its talents provides these answers and solutions. Individual endeavors are at the heart of creative writing. One student wrote the following quatrain voluntarily as homework:

Jerusalem
Eight entrances in the wall surround this ancient city.
Many wars have been fought over it, what a pity!
The Dome of the Rock, a Moslem Mosque stands near the
east wall
While the Jewish Western Wall stands next to it all.

The student who wrote the quatrain as homework had traveled with her parents to the West Bank of the Jordan and had become highly fascinated with the old city of Jerusalem (See Ediger, 1998). She read her poem to the entire class. The teacher then asked each student to write a quatrain on any topic. Interest and motivation were very high here. The writer truly felt that pupils indeed put forth much effort in the creative writing endeavor.

Students tend to like the creative and the new when it comes to writing poetry. Motivation appears to be high when large group, committee endeavors, as well as individual pursuits are in evidence. Learners need adequate background information to put thoughts into writing. Students seem to like to share ideas with others. Inventive spelling was used in the individual written quatrains when needed. The writer recommends that ST's and regular teachers stress creative writing as an important part of the curriculum, especially if the subject matter can be integrated and related (Ediger, 1997).

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When Will I Ever Use This?

Laura J. Steinig

How often have you heard a student complain, "Why are we learning this? I'll never need to use this in real life." Imagine my excitement when, for the first time as a graduate student in education, I used something I learned in the classroom less than a week later, in real life.

Tuesday. Introduction to Teaching class. A lesson about inclusion. Actually, it was "Everything I Ever Wanted To Know About Inclusion But Was Afraid To Ask" packed into two hours. We watched a video about inclusion through elementary school to employment. We learned about Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.). While I knew this was valuable information, as I was only just beginning the Master's Program at Duquesne University, I figured it wouldn't affect me for at least a year. But, I was wrong.

Sunday. My first day in front of my own classroom. As a Conservative Jew and an education student, I easily found a job teaching Hebrew school on Sunday mornings. I had been planning this first day of school for months. I wasn't even nervous. Everything went even better than I had expected. Teaching second graders is much more fun and a lot less nerve-wracking than teaching my peers.

Though teaching was easier than I had ever dreamed, there was one thing for which I hadn't planned. One of my students, let's call him Aaron, was deaf. The synagogue provided an interpreter, but this was something I had to think about that hadn't even crossed my mind before.

Later that day, after Hebrew school, I had a meeting with the interpreter, Aaron's father, and a consultant for deaf students from the Jewish Educational Institute of Pittsburgh. This meeting was extremely useful to me, not only in helping to improve Aaron's religious school experience, but in improving my experiece with hearing impaired students, as well.

Aaron is included into mainstream classes in a public school. He is very bright and is performing at and above the second grade level. His father brought in a copy of his I.E.P. and I was so excited that I understood all that was being discussed, and could contribute to the conversation. The consultant gave me many suggestions on how to work with Aaron and ways to help my hearing students understand his deafness.

The next week, I changed the seating arrangement in my classroom so that Aaron would be close enough to read my lips. I asked the students if they knew what the interpreter was doing. They recognized the sign language. I tried to draw parallels between Aaron's hearing aids and my eyeglasses. I asked Aaron if he had anything to say. He speaks extremely well. He told his classmates that while he can hear with his hearing aids, they should talk to him face to face so he can read their lips. The hearing students are very accepting of Aaron. They asked him a few questions, but they treat him just as they would treat anyone else.

Teaching a deaf student doesn't even phase me anymore. Aaron participates in class just like everyone else: they all play, color, and learn, together. He also has the same behavior problems as any other second grader. Really, he is a child just like the rest of them. Adjustments I have made for Aaron's learning have improved my teaching as a whole. This first teaching job, and first encounter with inclusion, has turned into an essential learning experience for me.

The next time you are a student in a classroom and you find yourself asking, "When will I ever use this in real life?" don't be surprised if it happens sooner than you think. Because of this experience, I have a much firmer grasp on the fact that what I learn in graduate school will be applied in real life. It has also reinforced my notion that I have chosen the correct career path. I can't wait until I have my own classroom 5 days a week so I can start applying everything else I have learned.

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There Is More Than One Way of Teaching

Robert Wagner

After taking several graduate courses, I began to notice something. It's something that really isn't obvious, but it is always occurring. Moreover, this "something" is the fact that teachers, from elementary to post-secondary, constantly use only one method of teaching.

What is disturbing is that many of the books I have recently read imply that the method of teaching being discussed, analyzed, and demonstrated in the text is the only method that should be used. For example, David Johnson, Roger Johnson, and Edythe Johnson Holubec do not hide their opinion that collaborative learning is the only way to teach students in *The New Circles of Learning* (ASCD, 1994). In fact, Johnson et al. are very brazen in stating many times that the teacher should teach by only using collaborative learning and this is the best way to teach students. According to Johnson et al., there should be full attendance at every class meeting, all of the students should be learning in the class, the students are being placed in the ideal academic environment, and all the students should be getting A grades.

Unfortunately, this is not so. Students skip the class meetings and their collaborative group meetings. A graduate assistant calls students to tell them that they were not in their groups for class. In fact, one student said "So what?" when told that she missed the group meetings. Another student said that only one member of his group showed up for a class.

Evidently, something is not working here. Some students learn successfully in collaborative groups and like the learning style. Some students may not learn in collaborative groups and show their dislike for the class by not showing up. If the method is to encourage learning, which Johnson et al. clearly state in their text that collaborative learning definitely should, then it is obviously not happening here.

The problem is not collaborative learning, the teacher, or any other teaching style. The problem is that teachers often rely on only one teaching style and run that teaching style into the ground. No adjustments are ever made, and what eventually occurs is that students are lost along the way.

The solution to this problem is that teachers should go from using one teaching style to using multiple teaching styles. In order to do this there are several things to keep in mind:

1. *The type of class that you have.* Each class a teacher will have will be different. No two classes will ever be alike, and this can mean that a teacher may have to use two different teaching styles. In a sense, teachers are like meteorologists. You don't know what is occurring exactly because there are so many variables existing in your classes.

For example, George Hillocks, Jr. talks about a student teacher in *Teaching Writing as Reflective Practice* (Teachers College Press, 1995) using Donald Graves's method of teaching for English classes. However, the students resisted the changes and did not want to do the work. Although the student teacher was following the textbook approach on how to teach using that method, the textbook approach will not always work. This leads to the second point.

2. *Be flexible and be open for options.* Unfortunately, too many teachers rely only on that one solution and nothing else. If a teaching method is failing, scrap it for now, and try something else. Look for possibilities and different alternative methods of teaching. If the Donald Graves's approach doesn't work, use something else and then moveback to Graves's method of teaching. By battering away with one teaching approach when it is obviously, not working is counterproductive.

3. *Prevent overkill.* Unfortunately, teachers have the nasty habit of getting too carried away with a certain teaching method. In a suburban Pittsburgh high school, students are losing their journals because they have a journal for every class. It probably would be best not to have a journal in your class if all the other classes have journals. Try to mix learning styles together, and act like a person at either a buffet or a salad bar instead of "order one entree" at a restaurant. Have a little bit of collaborative learning in the classroom, a little bit of journal writing, a little bit of discussion, and a little bit of direct instruction.

By varying teaching styles, it would make classes more enjoying and more productive. In addition, it prevents losing the students if a particular method,

even though it is on the cutting edge of education, just doesn't work for them. By changing teaching styles on the students, both teacher and students are not stuck in a rut. This leads to the fourth and final point.

4. *There isn't a universal method of teaching.* Read that again. And again. In addition, some more, because too many educators believe that there is only one method of teaching that is the best for students. For each student, there is a different method of teaching that works for them. There will be certain instructional methods that may appeal only to particular classes.

I feel that one of the biggest problems in education is that educators, administrators, and parents feel there is only one way that students should be taught. If this is true, then why is there so much discussion over whole-language versus the transmission model of education? By using different methods of teaching, the teacher keeps his classes from getting stale and boring. The teacher also gets to touch each student with a learning style that meets that particular student's needs. Finally, the teacher has a better chance of not losing the student that is not learning anything in the class. By making adjustments and using different methods, the chances of that particular student becoming successful may be better than just using only one method of teaching.

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The Course Portfolio: Documenting the Scholarship of Teaching

Deborah B. Kennedy

I began my career in education five years ago when I was hired to develop a new program at a local community college. Part of my responsibilities as Director of the new program would be to teach several of the courses. As is the case with many professors, my expertise in a particular field qualified me as a teacher although I had never taken a formal education course or read a single piece regarding the methodology of teaching and learning. The desire to improve my teaching techniques led me to a Doctoral program in education at Duquesne University where I learned a great deal about the scholarship of teaching and learning. The question confronting me recently was how to incorporate this new knowledge into a course that I currently taught. In addition to developing a method for "trying out" new teaching strategies, I also wanted to assess the impact of altered teaching methods on student learning. I was very excited about synthesizing newfound knowledge into my teaching but I wanted to do it in a format constructed to provide both personal assessment of instruction and adequate student evaluation of learning. The process for achieving these goals was realized after reading a piece by Cerbin (1993) in which he describes a method of documenting the nature and quality of teaching and learning within the construct of the course portfolio.

Cerbin suggests the individual course could be viewed as a scholarly piece that combines content and teaching strategies to accomplish specific learning goals. According to Cerbin, "A portfolio depicts the nature and quality of an individual's teaching **and** students' learning—it explains the connections among the instructor's intentions, teaching strategies and students' learning, thinking and development" (p. 4). The course portfolio concept is based on the tenet that the primary aim of teaching is to enhance student learning and development. Therefore, teaching and learning are interdependent constructs making it impossible to evaluate one without examining the other.

Cerbin's work is a variation of the teaching portfolio that serves as a collection of work demonstrating teaching accomplishments. Edgerton, Hutchings, and Quinlan (1991) in *The Teaching Portfolio* expand the view of the teaching portfolio from a collection of best works to one that includes artifacts of teaching and learning with evaluative reflection on teaching practice. The authors state, "...portfolios should be reflective: work samples would be accompanied by faculty commentary and explanation that reveal not only what was done but why, the thinking behind the teaching" (p. 4). Teaching portfolios are currently being used as faculty evaluation tools (Melland & Volden, 1996), models for professional development (Bergeron, Wermuth, & Mammar, 1997), in pre-service and teacher induction programs (Carroll, Potthoff, & Huber, 1996; Giuliano, 1997) and even as a method for school administrators to demonstrate school growth (Stanfill, 1996). Researchers suggest the portfolio concept may provide critical feedback for instructors questioning the success of teaching and learning within the individual course structure (Cerbin & Hutchings, 1993; Cleary, et al., 1997).

Contents of the Course Portfolio

The purpose of the course portfolio is to demonstrate both teacher expertise and methods utilized as well as provide student feedback regarding the learning process. Therefore, the portfolio should reflect the scope of the course including teaching and learning goals in addition to measured student outcomes. As stated by Cleary et al. (1997), "Portfolio evidence is based on how teachers and professors develop answers to problems related to the act of teaching, including decisions regarding what material to cover or determining what students must know and be able to do" (p. 34). Cerbin (1993) provides a working model for capturing the complexity of the teaching and learning process. The model

contents include:

1. A "Teaching Statement" that describes learning goals and connects teacher practice with students' learning.
2. Samples of key assignments and learning activities that apply to significant learning goals.
3. Evidence of student thinking and learning.
4. Student feedback about their learning experience collected at various times throughout the course.
5. Teacher self-assessment of student learning. What worked, what could be done to improve teaching and learning?

Implementation of the Model

The most critical step in incorporating this form of portfolio into a course is for the faculty member to critically analyze what the instructor intends to achieve. The Teaching Statement becomes a form of teaching philosophy that is specific to that particular course. Some of the questions that need to be considered when developing the Teaching Statement include:

1. What are my teaching goals?
2. What content do I think is essential to include in the course?
3. What strategies will I use to involve students in the learning process?
4. How will I elicit student feedback and evaluate student learning?

Once the Teaching Statement is formalized, it serves as a model for teaching practices throughout the course. For example, one of my primary goals as a professor is to actively engage students in the learning process. I also believe it is essential to stimulate students' curiosity to learn and encourage their development as critical thinkers. Therefore, my approach to a specific course needs to reflect these identified goals. Writing a Teaching Statement and planning on how to implement specified goals encourages teachers to critically assess standard teaching strategies. Will teaching goals be achieved with the traditional lecture approach or should more appropriate activities be planned so that intended outcomes are actually achieved? Reflections along these lines may result in totally changing the format of the course. Active learning techniques such as free writes about daily content, jigsaw activities, group teaching assignments and punctuated lectures could become the standard rather than the exception.

An integral part of course portfolios is the assessment link. Are students actually learning and how do you know? What can the teacher do to improve the learning process? It is too late to ask these questions at the end of the course. Assessment must be an ongoing function within the course so that changes can be made to improve the learning process if needed. One of the methods for gathering this data is incorporating thinking journals into the course curriculum. Both assigned and spontaneous journal writes can provide intimate details on the individual student response to the course. In addition, using such evaluation tools as the One-Minute Paper, the Muddiest Point, and informal mid-term assessments can provide the instructor with various forms of feedback on the teaching and learning process. The course portfolio documents the type and quality of the teaching and learning process not only to evaluate the effectiveness of the teacher but also to provide that teacher with information that may indicate the need for change. With the course portfolio model students play an active role in the assessment process and, ultimately, future course revisions by providing meaningful feedback to the professor regarding learning outcomes.

What Can Be Gained?

Part of the evaluation process incorporated into Cerbin's portfolio model includes teacher self-assessment of the teaching and learning processes that occur within the course. How many times do we take the time to evaluate what went well, what didn't and what we could do differently the next time around to improve student learning? An essential part of the course portfolio effort is to reflect on these factors. Therefore, the course portfolio has the potential to exert tremendous influence over teaching practice. As Edgerton, Hutchings, and Quinlan (1991) stated regarding teaching portfolios, "...portfolios display not only the final products of teaching but also its processes - the thoughts behind the actions..." (p. 6). The course portfolio can play an important role in providing teachers with

documentation and assessment of the quality of their teaching. Displaying evidence of student learning could also be a useful tool for tenure and promotion purposes.

Another significant benefit of course portfolios suggested by some authors is the expansion of the portfolio beyond the course and into the realm of scholarly conversations with other faculty about the teacher's learning experience. Portfolios can provide authentic evidence about teaching that can lead to informative discussions regarding the qualities of good teaching, effective teaching strategies and alternative assessment techniques. Using portfolios to stimulate discussions about teaching and learning might be their greatest potential value (Cleary, et al., 1997; Edgerton, et al., 1991; Wolf, et al., 1995).

Summary

There is widespread use of portfolios throughout all levels of education. The typical form is that of the student portfolio which exhibits growth in learning over time. The course portfolio provides an organized method for teachers to assess their own growth as a professional educator. In addition, the course portfolio offers the opportunity to enhance the teaching and learning process as well as foster scholarly discussions about the process. Examining the nature and quality of teaching and learning can help all teachers fulfill their ultimate responsibility — to provide a quality learning experience for their students.

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The Benefits of Keeping a Teaching Portfolio

Antonio S. Caruso

Approximately three months after finishing graduate school with an MS.Ed. in Secondary English Education, I was offered my first teaching position in a rural middle school in Pennsylvania. In the span of one month I had to pack my belongings, find a place to live and settle into and begin what would be for me, my first real experience as a professional teacher.

I was overwhelmed by the move, the settling into a new place to live and the nervous energy I had towards my first teaching assignment. I knew I was a good teacher, but I feared what every new teacher must fear: "Am I as good as I believe I am? Will I be as successful in the professional world as I was in the Academic?"

Solid fears indeed. On more than one occasion I listened to professors discuss students who seemed to be on their way to becoming excellent teachers suddenly fall once the classroom was truly their own. Although I considered myself secure in the knowledge that I wanted to be a teacher, I soon found myself second-guessing my ideas.

My apprehensions were soon put to the test as I began my first day of teaching. I was handed curriculum guidelines, useful tips on classroom management and a supposed wealth of other information regarding the development of my own classroom. I worked diligently and thoughtfully, desiring to maintain my idealistic attitudes towards teaching while satiating the practical necessities of everyday work. I developed lesson plans, focused my curriculum on journal writing and thoughtful inquisition. I gave tests, taught vocabulary and grammar, and struggled to find a focus so that my students would have an idea on why all this information I was teaching them was important.

I enjoyed myself in the classroom, often teasing with my students and doing my best to ease the tension that so often comes with learning. Moreover, my students responded by working hard, writing well and participating in class. After three months of what seemed like constant pressure, however, I still found myself groping for a focus—an idea or commitment—that would bring my teaching together and give it some cohesiveness. I also realized that I was missing a very important component to my own development as a teacher. I was not learning along with my students, and I was troubled by this fact.

When I first decided to go into the teaching profession, I marveled over the possibility of being able to work in an environment that would be so conducive to my own intellectual development. Being surrounded by fellow teachers, I believed, would inspire me to not only become an outstanding teacher, but one who was as committed to the learning process as I would expect my students to be. I realized that this was not the case. Many teachers shunned the idea of becoming academics themselves. My role in the classroom was not supposed to be fellow learner but leader, test-giver, correction supervisor. I looked for ways to change the situation.

I felt as if I was slowly losing control over the teaching process. I felt that I was hindering my own development by not reflecting on what I did in the classroom. I made the same mistakes repeatedly, and I had to fight to stop the feeling that I was merely keeping up and not able to focus on the next week or the next month. While looking for a solution, I turned to literature and journal writing. I felt that I could satisfy my desires in this manner as I had in the past. However, I could not apply what I was reading and writing about on a personal level to what I wanted to accomplish on a professional level.

The answer came by means of an expected, if not anticipated, source, my graduate school advisor. After voicing my concerns to her in a telephone conversation, she suggested my keeping a teaching portfolio much the same way I kept a learning portfolio in an Instructional Techniques class she taught just a year earlier. She argued that the development of the portfolio would enable me to focus clearly on classroom accomplishments. At the same time, the portfolio could allow me to analyze and enhance my development as a professional, like the way I used my learning portfolio to analyze my

development as a student in her class.

I began creating my portfolio in a familiar manner. I organized a six-pocket carry-file into six distinct yet related files. I had a specific slot in the carry-file for each of the following: Current Articles on Teaching, Resource Materials, Professional Development Materials, Lesson Ideas, Daily Teaching Journal and Current Text. I labeled each of these sections, set about collecting the required information for each section, and hoped that keeping the portfolio would satiate my concerns.

I began to realize what a valuable tool I was in the process of developing in the very early stages of the portfolio. The portfolio helped me focus on my profession development. The portfolio also satisfied the true need and desire I had to continually stay focused and keep in touch with the world of education.

As the weeks and months passed and I religiously focused part of my attention on the teaching portfolio, I realized that my job was becoming easier. I began looking for current articles on education, reading them and reflecting on them. I collected resource and professional data that helped me keep abreast on the dynamic and ever-changing world of education. I located and stored lesson ideas for the present and the future. I consistently looked for current texts on teaching to enhance my background and give me an alternate means of engaging in teaching

Perhaps most importantly, I kept a daily teaching journal where I discussed and focused on the ideas generated by my constant delving for information. Interestingly enough, I began to realize what a valuable tool I was in the process of developing in the very early stages of the portfolio. The portfolio helped me focus on my profession development. The portfolio also satisfied the true need and desire I had to continually stay focused and keep in touch with the world of education.

The change that occurred in me as a teacher was noticeable from both my students and my peers. My students knew I was keeping my own portfolio and often asked me to read from my own journal writing. I also used the portfolio to evaluate my lessons and, with my students' help, would take time out to discuss the focus of the learning going on in the classroom as it was revealed to me through my portfolio. My fellow teachers were also enamored and curious about my teaching portfolio. I engaged in dialogue with them on a variety of issues that I became aware of using my portfolio. While some teachers scoffed at the idea of measuring my progression as a teacher because of the work involved, others respected the idea and became inquisitive.

Regardless, the bottom line with the teaching portfolio was that it provided me an excellent means by which I was able to measure and take an active role in the learning going on in my own life. It was interesting to see how my students responded to my own commitment to the portfolio. Mimicking me, my students became writers, editors and learners. They asked serious questions that reflected the notion that they were beginning to take learning seriously. Furthermore, they began to see a connection between what went on in the classroom and how and why they were to decimate the information so that they could most effectively gain from their efforts.

This article would not be complete without my mentioning the parents of my kids. During parent/teacher conferences, and during individual conferences set up by either the parents or me, they were overwhelmingly supportive of the efforts I was making with my portfolio. Parents appreciated the effort I was making in reflecting on my own development, and they, in turn, encouraged their children to, "Be like Mr. C!"

The rewards of creating and maintaining my portfolio were numerous and beneficial. However, I caution the reader not to reach any conclusions beyond the idea that the teaching portfolio is an excellent means of maintaining focus and being interactive with your teaching. The true rewards of the portfolio will not come at the end of the school year if you simply file the portfolio away among the places you keep lesson plans that will never be used again. Rather, teachers should look at the portfolio as a process that should continue for one's entire tenure.

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Many teachers have become too stagnant in their approaches to teaching. Others are so committed that they fail to maintain a proper focus in their classrooms and they fail to realize that they are not helping themselves to develop, intellectually. Keeping and maintaining a teaching portfolio solves many of these problems be-cause it almost forces you to pay attention to the continuity of your development as a teacher, and the continuity of your lessons.

We know, as educators, that writing to learn is an invaluable tool for our students if used correctly. Why should we limit our own ability to do the same? How many of you can really admit to not only keeping up with current trends in education, current news, teaching strategies, and literature, but also writing about these ideas as well? Furthermore, how many of you can point to means by which you evaluate your own effectiveness in the classroom? If we assume that good evaluations by administrators are the only means by which we are to gauge our development as teachers, then we are doing a disservice to our students, our schools and our communities.

Keeping a teaching portfolio will hold you accountable for the mistakes you make, and reinforce all that is good in your world of teaching. I would never have been able to get through my first year of teaching without it. I look forward to using it in the future

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Quality or Quantity? That is the Question

Lisa C. Schonberger

Are you guilty of collecting a piece of student's work while visually weighing its merits against another students? I mean, literally thinking, "Why is your project only several papers long while their work is in 3 inch notebooks?" Have you ever done this or are you doing it now? I use to be guilty of the practice of eyeing before assessing, until I began to practice what educational literature has been preaching for years—everyone learns differently!

I realize that a rubric can standardize the outcome or product expected by the teacher, however, is there any room for individual creativity? A student has the right to pass or fail based on their own merits, not that of a rubric or even worse, not competing for the grade based on 'how many inches the package measures.'

We all know children who are so proud of themselves for reading a book that is "this thick!" Imagine them holding up 3 inches using their thumb and index finger. Try to ask them about the content and see what you get. Who cares about the inside stuff, feel my arm muscles!

I have been working with student teachers for the past nine years. To culminate their experience, each student teacher must present their growth portfolio as authentic assessment of their learning. When I first began to require portfolios, I would become awe inspired at the size of the container (typically a 3-4 inch notebook). "Wow!" I'd proclaim, and immediately believe that that must represent an "A" student teacher. Wrong. I began to realize that it represented a student teacher who did not have the ability to analyze, synthesize or evaluate pieces of evidence that would truly demonstrate their level of understanding and overall growth during the semester. Containers of that proportion typically contained lots of 'stuff' and many times 'cutesy' stuff, but the connections were weak and unclear. Sometimes a portfolio of that size also represented the size of that student's ego. Can't you see how good I am by the amount of "stuff" that I have collected?

Perhaps I am over dramatizing how we assess student's abilities. Recently, I was asked to rethink an assignment based on the appearance of my product rather than the content. I am a doctoral student and a professional educator, so you might be able to feel where I am coming from. I was also told that by the "looks" of the paper, I am missing a lot of "stuff." Stuff?

It is often said that teachers in the field where it can be monitored and adjusted accordingly practice effective educational theory. I guess I must overlook the fact that I do think and produce differently than my overachieving peers. Perhaps, I am just not as good at collecting and analyzing the "stuff" that demonstrates my conceptual growth and understanding. I also know that 3-inch notebooks can be purchased at any local office supply store for a reasonable price.

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Incorporating Technology into the Core Classroom

Jean L. Schulte

Today, educators stand on the cusp of an academic evolution: we may now use internet-based technologies in the classroom to extend student learning. Employers have noted the need for workers to be technologically adept, and they also have stressed the need for workers' proficiency in communications skills—both oral and written. Additionally, teachers have felt the need to reach out to students with more than the usual, standard lecture-test-paper format. In my own classroom in the English Department at Duquesne University, I use a unique program called Web Course Tools (Web-CT) to help my students navigate the information superhighway and avoid the speed bumps along the way. In what follows, I will discuss the web page I've constructed for my introduction to literature class using Web-CT, and recount the classroom successes.

All Duquense freshmen must take the CORE Imaginative Literature and Critical Writing course normally offered during the spring term. The course incorporates all genres of literature, encourages classroom discussion and participation, and asks students to write several papers and take at least two major exams. The students have not had literature since they were seniors in high school, so we try to refresh their memories about literary terms, how to research and cite literary sources properly, and get them reacclimated to reading poetry and drama. One of the best ways I have found to do all of these things is by requiring students to use the WebCT page I have set up for their use. To protect their privacy, only those whom I give access may perform certain functions. My WebCT frontpage contains several icons—guidelines, calendar, private mail, bulletin board, and chat. The guidelines are the course requirements. I list the number of papers I require, the percentages of all the class activities, the policies I ask them to adhere to such as my latework policy and the like. This way, students should never say "I didn't hear about that" or "I lost that paper." I know that they always have access to the policies governing the course. The syllabus is set up in calendar form; it lists the daily activities month-by-month. Since this is a web-based calendar, I can add links to other webpages. This is a real bonus. Students can go to various pages and research the authors we discuss. They can find additional literature the authors have written. I can ask them to read authors who are not in our anthology, and avoid the cost of xeroxing the pieces for them to read. In the case of an author like William Blake, his illuminated poetry is online and students can now both read and see his artwork.

Students can send me private mail via this page. I tell them that the Web-CT page is "one stop shopping" because they only need to remember one address and this address will give them access to the syllabus, guidelines, discussion forums, my mailbox, plus the mailboxes of all other students in the class. When I get a private message, the icon lights up on the frontpage, signalling a new post. I can reply to it, save the message, and it's also a great convenience for me to keep student queries separate from all my other email.

The bulletin board is a public forum for the entire class to use. They can post messages to ask things like: "I missed class, what did we do today?" or "here's my research idea for my next paper, anyone have any ideas about sources or a good thesis sentence?" or even "the elections for student government are tomorrow, please go vote!". I tell the students that this is *their* bulletin board, they may use it however they wish. Additionally, they must post their journal entries to the bulletin board. I also post the journal entry prompts to the bulletin board. Students may read them and store them for future reference, or delete them. They can reply to the post, and post their own journal entry responses. This technique has worked well for classes for several reasons. Students save time by not having to wait for a printer and then print the pages out. Obviously, it also cuts down on the paper trail and this is a bonus for me—I have much less work to carry and keep track of.

When students post entries to the bulletin board, everyone in the class can read them. When I found that students actually did read each others' work and respond to it in kind, that astounded me. They actually did more work than was required of them, but they didn't seem to mind! The students created a writing community, and the quality of their work reflected this increased interest. Sometimes, students respond to each others' journal entries, much like I do when I grade them. I believe that this out-of-class discussion helps them achieve both higher grades and academic satisfaction. Presenting and assessing their electronic journals—a public forum—motivates students to do their best when they post their own journal responses. They also like seeing the record of their work, plus my responses, over the course of the term. I encourage them to incorporate ideas from their journal entries into their longer papers.

Class participation drastically increases when using this medium—every student "talks" during the online meetings. Even normally shy or reticent students have no problem posting comments to the online classroom.

The last function that I use on WebCT is the chatroom. We use the chatrooms for several things—to provide additional online office hours, to provide a forum for groupwork they complete outside of class, and to have online classes. The online office hours are a mixed success. Sometimes I might wait online for students to show up and no one does. Sometimes they'll need more help than an online discussion will allow and we'll follow with a face-to-face meeting. Sometimes I sense they're afraid to ask all their questions in this forum; but they'll use the private email later to post more. But, the benefits of such online office hours are several. I can meet with several students at once, and when they have similar questions, we can all help each other gain insights. I can meet with students for whom my regularly scheduled office hours are inconvenient. This way, I can actually "meet" with each student over the course of the term. Also, on those nights before a project is due, I can schedule an hour of evening online office hours to allay any last-minute anxieties or questions.

I sometimes have students work in groups to accomplish tasks such as researching a topic, or peer editing. They appreciate the online chatrooms because they can connect with each other now from wherever they are—at home, at the dorms, at work if they have a computer and modem—and save a trip to campus. Students also like being able to meet at inconvenient times—at night when they may not want to walk around the campus alone, or on weekends when many students may balance work and school responsibilities or they may go home. I like these group-based projects for a number of reasons. I can have students meet in chatrooms where the conversation is recorded. This allows me to grade their project—their work is posted to the chatroom log and I can view it, save it, even print it so they can have copies if they ask for them. I can also chart the directions their conversation takes—I can sense problems they may have understanding key concepts and then address these concerns in class discussions, or see that they do have a clear sense of direction and then move us onto new concepts.

Occasionally, we meet online to conduct a regularly-scheduled class. Usually, I do this as per their request—they nearly universally enjoy this forum. We will meet in a classroom and begin to discuss the work at hand for that day. I'll start by posing a question. Students will type madly to keep up with the ensuing discussion. They all seem to have something to say in response to my questions or comments. I have noticed that class participation drastically increases when using this medium—every student "talks" during the online meetings. Even normally shy or reticent students have no problem posting comments to the online classroom. When I have asked them why this is so, they say that they do not feel as uneasy in this environment. They note how they like the anonymity the online class offers. Finally, they never feel disarticulated. When I asked normally quiet students if they prefer the online discussion to regular participation, they noted that they enjoyed hearing multiple voices, and partaking

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in multiple discussions at once. Therefore, a student can join in one of several discussions at any given time. As an instructor, I appreciate this forum all the more because, again, the conversations may be tracked. This way, I can account for the topics we've covered and not yet covered. The class becomes more student-centered. They all help elucidate the day's questions and issues. I can even take attendance, because whoever logs on is also recorded in the chatroom.

Students used technology as a medium to voice their opinions about the class directly to me on their online end-of-semester evaluations.

I think that by using this web-based technology in my classroom, I've allowed students to progress in several ways. Their confidence has soared—they participate more in classroom discussions, they handle a critique of their work appropriately and also offer even-handed critiques of their peers' work online. They are more willing to ask questions and think critically by participating in multi-threaded discussions. The classroom has become more democratic in that we all may have a voice in where discussion goes on any given day, and we can all offer comment on the direction of the class. Students who arrived at Duquesne without any Internet experience, and those who couldn't even turn on a computer, let alone type a paper, have received a thorough introduction to important computer skills that they need to succeed academically and beyond.

I also feel that I have reached my students on a richer level, a more personal plane, because I have had individual and group conversations with them. Students used technology as a medium to voice their opinions about the class directly to me on their online end-of-semester evaluations. One student wrote: "I really liked this semester. The best thing that came out of the course was the introduction to so many new authors. After we read Langston Hughes, I found so much literature of his. So far I have read both of his autobiographies and have read many poems. I would never have thought of that on my own!" My WebCT course has allowed both teacher and students to exchange ideas in multiple and progressive ways.

I have installed a "guest access" to the WebCT site. You can reach this by typing http://webct.cc.duq.edu:8900 and at the prompt click "go to courses" then pick the course CORE Imaginative Literature and Critical Writing 102-05. At the next prompt, the "name" is "guest" and the "password" is "tigger" and this will allow you to look over the page yourself.

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Online Teaching: Interviews with Professional Educators

Mark Rescher

Computer technology is a hot topic for discussion in the news. In education, programs designed to promote distance learning and instructional technology are sprouting up all around the country. Duquesne University is no exception. With the recent development of a Masters program in Instructional Technology, Duquesne represents the merger of technology and educational studies. Recently, I had the chance to interview three professional educators from Duquesne University—Linda Wojnar, Josh M. Slifkin, and Jean Schulte. All three have taught university level courses incorporating this technology in classroom activities. In some cases, the courses offered were completely conducted online. Bearing in mind the experiences of the individuals, I came up with a list of eight questions that I posed to the three instructors. It was my goal to provide feedback from experienced online instructors to teachers who are either beginning to use technology in the classroom or are interested in doing so. The questions, along with the replies from all three educators, are provided below.

What is your definition of online teaching?

Linda Wojnar—Teaching online occurs when a student and teacher are separated by time and geographical location. Teaching online offers students a choice of when and where the learning will take place. Students may take as long as they 'like "to think" as long as-time lines are met for assignments. Learning may occur when the student feels his or her learning is optimum, and is not guided by the day or time of the week the class is offered. Online teaching is also done without the aid of verbal and nonverbal cues which is not how teachers are used to teaching. Teachers online are more facilitators or coaches-as literature calls them, "A guide by the side." In online teaching, the teacher uses a scaffolding approach, offering assistance to students at varying times and degrees. Teachers assist student discovery of information. Because of the format, evidence of learning is more obvious to the teacher and learner. Teachers can capture conversations from all groups within a class, rather than only listening to the group he or she is talking with, then save their chats for the teacher. Teachers really get to know their students online. Students talk more freely to the teacher online than they would in a traditional classroom.

Josh Slifkin- -Any kind of pedagogy that makes use of Internet applications for use in direct application, discussion, or research. It can also include using the web as a complete means or adjunct to teaching.

Jean Schulte—When an educator uses online resources in the classroom. This can take several different forms. The first would be a purely distance learning based atmosphere where teacher and student do not meet, where all instruction is online, where distribution and reception of assignments is all online. To some this is the definition of online teaching but this is a version I do not prefer.

I am a moderate. For me, online teaching brings the web into the classroom to perform activities in the context of a class with four walls. The range of activities for online teaching encompasses everything from finding sources for paper topics to working on a web site of one's own creation.

Describe your pedagogical background where it pertains to online teaching? Include a discussion about relevant formal and informal teacher training you underwent.

Linda Wojnar—I have an interest in online learning because I learn so much from teaching and learning through this format. I believe a teacher

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online can teach in a traditional classroon, but a traditional classroom teacher may not be successful at teaching online. I am in the ILEAD Doctoral Program at Duquesne University. I plan to do research in assessments of online chats. I have done a literature review regarding theoretical frameworks of Bloom, Vygotsky, Strickland, Sizer, and others. I believe online courses can be structured to develop more "critical thinking." I also believe that teachers need to structure in their courses using Bloom's taxonomic levels of questioning. Adults can no longer ignore critical thought about content, its relevancy, and application for use. Although traditional classrooms teach critical thinking, online application is visible in more ways than its traditional counterpart because the online classroom captures more documented interactions, and can therefore demonstrate more written evidence of critical thinking.

I developed a lot of my own ideas initially based on my 31 years of school teaching and learning. I also did a literature search in distance education, attended seminars locally (Summer Institute of Technology at Duquesne University for a week in June, 1998) and nationally (Madison, Wisconsin)in distance education. I visited the University of Queensland, Australia and spoke with educators and researchers there regarding distance education. I participated in poster presentations regarding teaching online, and am currently working with Dr. Lawrence Tomei on a new Master's Degree in Instructional Technology with a focus on Distance Learning. I am a "ground-floor up" person, and enjoy designing and developing new courses, especially in the area of distance education.

Josh Slifkin— Previously, I had taken an Instructional Technology course that used WebCT in my doctoral program. In this class I was introduced to what it was like to be a student using online technology. The course itself was not completely online but used WebCT as one of its principal components.

Following that I team-taught an Instructional Technology course in the Fall 1998-1999 semester. This course was set up to be one hundred percent online. I discovered that I did not like the software used to teach this course as much as the software I used in my doctoral studies. For this course we used an instructional application called FirstClass. Unlike WebCT, FirstClass is both a stand alone product as well as an intranet program.

Web CT, on the other hand, is used seamlessly in conjunction with internet browsers such as Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer. It provides many of the same features that FirstClass has such as multiple chat rooms and private email but also provides bulletin boards, course calendars, and links similar to those found on web pages. It is much easier to construct and personalize a course in WebCT. Students have fewer difficulties using WebCT because they enter the course site in the same manner as visiting a web page. All things considered, WebCT is a much friendlier, accessible product. Using the intranet version of FirstClass was awkward. It lacked many of WebCT's features, and was in many ways more difficult to work with than its counterpart.

Jean Schulte—I took a course called "Classrooms without Walls" at Duquesne University. Sponsored by CCIT, it was one week long and held during Spring Break 1996. In this workshop we went over everything from how to email to the rudiments of web page construction.

I also participated in a Summer Institute for Teaching with Technology, also sponsored by Duquesne University. The course was one week long with approximately thirty hours of instruction and took place during the Summer of 1997. We were put into workshops based upon proposals that were submitted. The workshop I was involved in centered upon the presentation software Microsoft PowerPoint and a file transfer software called FTP. I also learned how to create my own personal web page. For me, it was amazing how one could take stuff from a disk and put it straight into a web page without having to retype it. At this point, I did not know the web language HTML, so using these programs, I was saved from having to learn a new computer language.

In addition to this formal training, I was also an instructor for an online course. While I taught people in a traditional classroom, most activities were conducted online. In fact after the midterm, some students stopped coming to the class altogether, preferring instead to take the class from remote, computerized locations.

In your opinion, describe the single greatest challenge for teachers who are just beginning to use online teaching?

Linda Wojnar—Teaching without the use of oral interaction is the most challenging. Also, you need to have the entire course developed with alternative strategies for a vriety of learners.

Josh Slifkin—In general, dealing with technological problems. As long as you are skilled in it and have some background, no problems will be minimal. For my online course, the server site was the most critical component. For dialing into campus, my modem was capable of running at almost twice the speed the server could handle.

Jean Schulte—Teachers need to have very clear goals and a plan of action. Why would you even use online resources? You have to know what your objectives are before you can use online instruction.

Describe the single greatest challenge for students who are just beginning to use online teaching.

Linda Wojnar—For some students the challenge may involve downloading certain software packages and sending attachments. If it isn't the technology, then it may be the lack of physical contact with other classmates. Some students really prefer the socialization that the traditional classroom provides.

Josh Slifkin—Making it accessible for everyone who wants to be online. The two words here are compatibility and accessibility. Hardware, in this case actual computers, and software programs become key issues here. I found that the most difficult challenge I faced as a beginning online instructor was getting everyone up and running.

Jean Schulte—Adjusting to what one of my students called the "alienation of an online course." The student was an education major who was getting a lot of useful hints for conducting class in a room setting. She didn't know a lot of students to begin with and found it very hard to interact. As a result, she found it very difficult to get through the course. Students have to get used to this kind of setting which can be, at least initially, very difficult.

Are there ways in which online teaching is better than traditional forms of teaching? Ways in which online teaching is less effective than traditional forms of teaching? Please discuss in detail.

Linda Wojnar—There is definite written evidence of interactions between teacher and students, students and peers, students and the authors of the texts they read (if that is part of the requirements of the course). Students take a more active role in online learning. When students online don't participate in online chats or read assigned material it becomes obvious to everyone in the class when they are asked to respond to certain questions, applications of material, and so forth. In a traditional classroom, a student may choose to be passive in a group project, but if groups saved their private conversations, it becomes obvious when students are passive. Because thinking is evident in written expression, a teacher can identify problems when students misinterpret information provided and can quickly shift the learning in the appropriate direction. Students online learn a lot about themselves and how they learn best. They also improve their clarity of written instructions to others. Teaching online is less effective if students require constant reminders from the instructor as to what work was turned in and when assignments are due. Sometimes the lack of nonverbal interaction may cause difficulties when trying to interpret what a student is thinking. Students really need to be proficient in spelling and typing to work in an online format. Otherwise,

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classmates see all of the errors in spelling, or it seems like you wait forever for some students to complete their sentences in the chats when they can't type at all.

Josh Slifkin—On the positive side, it has the means to reach a larger number of people than traditional methods. It allows different kinds of writing and discussion to take place, and may allow normally reticent students the opportunity to be heard.

However, it disconnects the act of learning from a physical location. It can dilute the act of learning into the lowest common denominator situation. In some cases, it is unnecessary because students who could obtain an education in a traditional classroom could be cheated of such an education. I think education actually loses something without the interaction of people. It is tough to establish a "community of learners" without actually having live, physical, visual, spatial interaction.

Jean Schulte—I always have a couple of students who just don't talk. Online they talk in chatrooms, bulletin boards, and so forth. I can log the conversation and monitor it. I then save it and can include comments, even those of the "quiet" students, in class discussion. Some people like the anonymous participation an online course offers.

People tend to see it as a joke or less serious than a traditionally offered class. The problem seems to stem from the idea that the internet is "fun to surf."

In your opinion, what are some of the key differences between online teaching and regular classroom teaching?

Linda Wojnar—Instructions must be very clear. Teachers have to think backwards when they are doing their syllabus and activities. If extra time is not taken to think from the user's perspective, great confusion and misinterpretation of assignments can occur.

Josh Slifkin—You cannot teach for consistency because you sometimes only meet once every week or every two weeks. There is a lot more independent learning and a lot less direct discussion especially involving the teacher. Some students, especially beginners or those new to the content area might not have found a critical voice with which to speak. I think students have to be a lot more independent when they take an online class.

Jean Schulte—Now that I have been teaching online, I find that it would be to constraining to go back to classroom teaching 100% of the time. Online teaching allows you to effectively use visual aids in classroom activities. In one example, I taught a feminist unit to Duquesne University freshmen. We were discussing the role of women in history. I wanted to show them an affirmative example, so I taught them a lesson on Mary Cassat, the famous Impressionist painter who was also a Pittsburgh native. If I were in a regular classroom, I would have had to pass out all sorts of books with her artwork. This would have been very time consuming. Also, students would have only been able to view pictures once very quickly.

Online, I took the students to two different museums where her works are displayed in color. At these sites there were links to other sites where her life, history, and the Impressionist movement were discussed. The material could be accessed anytime the students wanted.

What are some of the problems all teachers and students face when using online teaching?

Linda Wojnar—If assignments are to be done in small groups, students who have difficulty working together in a traditional classroom can have the same type of problems working with others online even if the instructor assigns the groups. Some teachers have not been prepared to teach online or don't have the interest to teach online. You need to be highly motivated as a teacher and a student to teach and learn online.

Josh Slifkin—Because a lot of online teaching is purely technology-driven, that is the teacher could

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be absent from the learning. The level of student responsibility to complete projects and maintain discourse goes up. When things fall apart online, such as students not turning in their assignments or participating in discussions, it is a much worse situation than the traditional classroom.

Jean Schulte—Probably the biggest problem is lack of resources. In some ways there can be a democratization of information; in others it is merely a pipe dream. You need to have resources in order to be able to access online information; then, you need to have training on how to use the resources in an effective manner. I was lucky to have had two courses worth of training and good online facilities at my disposal. A lot of schools receive computers that are pre-bought for them by districts with little or no training and support provided. Consequentially, they cannot get the full instructional use out of them.

What do you see as online teaching's future? In the future, how will it grow or differ as a pedagogical teaching tool?

Linda Wojnar—I believe teaching online is the future although it won't and was never meant to replace the traditional classroom. I believe it has a place of its own for those students who, for various reasons, want the flexibility of learning at their own time, space, and location. I believe online learning will grow as more demands are placed on adults from family, work, and society. Adults are being challenged each day to do more with less time. Online teaching and learning permits parents to remain at home with their children. Students don't have to miss class because of inclement weather. Illness no longer has to separate students from class. Automotive breakdown does not prevent students from attending class. If a student is scheduled to take a class on Tuesday in a traditional classroom, the same student can take another course scheduled for the same day and time online. Students would have more choices and flexibility with scheduling. This may decrease some frustration. A parent no longer has to miss sports events, family celebrations (birthday, celebrations, or weddings). I believe that students should be more in charge of their learning. Most students know what they want to get out of a class that would be most beneficial to their lives. I also believe students can receive more attention in an online class. Students have more access to their teachers, more than classroom meetings and office hours combined. Online teachers and students can leave messages. The turn around time of most messages is within twenty-four hours.

Teachers need to know that courses online should be content enriched. No matter the technology, a content-less course is just a shell. The content is the driving force for the course, and the teacher needs to take more time planning a course online than a traditional class. Much more preparation time is needed for online courses. A teacher also spends much more time teaching an online class than a traditional course. Colleges and universities need to remain competitive locally, nationally and internationally within the educational market by finding out what the educational consumers need.

Josh Slifkin—Unfortunately, I see it as an easy way for schools to make money. I do not like the idea of using it to replace classroom teaching. I like the idea of it being used to as a part of classroom experience, but not as a complete replacement. I see it growing. I hope it will be incorporated into a traditional classroom curriculum in an adjunct capacity. If it is used as a means of attracting more students, I see it as alienating and shallow. In this case, many professional educators will view it as a fad.

Jean Schulte—I see future online technological growth taking two directions: It can lead to online correspondence courses, where everything is generated online. Or, more instuctors will take the approach I prefer and bring online activities into the classroom when they are pedagogically useful, and not as a substitute for personal interaction.

MARK RESCHER works for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's PA-Educator.net.

Poetry

Empirical

David Morris

On my way for toothpaste
I saw a squirrel
Busy with the season's work,
Mindless of the mufflers, whistles, subpoenas,
And general pandemonium of all towns.

I stopped as I always do;
It is one consolation we
Humans can get closer
To city squirrels
Than in the country.

At least for me
I mean, for next to the tragedy
Of zoos
There's really no way
Of engaging the cosmic knowing

In the city
Unless you're good with pigeons.
I'm not,
So there I stood,
And there the none-too-contemplative squirrel
worked.

Instinct teaches fear,
I suppose,
But experience tests it.
Now, Squirrel knew humans
Will not kill

Unless at work,
And turned to me.
I toed the lawn,
Then asked,
"How come you squirrels are always working,
Squirrel?"

"It's all I ever see you doing
Maybe an occasional chase
Up around and down a tree,
But right back to work!"
A fanfare of car horns broke out at the news.

"I say it's our big problem,
We people,
When we're at work,
All we do is work;
When we're not at work,

All we do is work
Work at determination,
Work at religion,
Work at excitement,
Work at melancholy."

"Why, there's no time
To reclaim your impressionable genius,
No time even to
Pick up all these
Cigarette filters."

Squirrel made answer,
Sage as usual,
(But that's not poetry)
And climbed back up
The city tree.

Portfolio Metaphor

Cassandra Fuller

I
w a s
like a
scurrying
mouse seeing only
what was before me
in the large field
of teaching.
I
was lifted by this course
like a hawk's grasp on my mind
I am soaring with the bird seeing the
field not in its entirety, but broader
and broader. There are no details,
I am not in the field, on the ground
but, I understand my position in it
better. So, when the hawk wavers
and drops me back to the ground,
as I am immersed in the field
I will understand more
and remember
the
bird's
eye
view
& I
will
return
t o
it
somehow.

Myself As Teacher

Cassandra Fuller

What can a photograph
reveal about the merit of a teacher
Can you see how far I've come,
all the hurdles I've jumped
by looking in my eyes?
Does my smile disclose the faith
I have in myself and others?
It is obvious that I am an optimist,
searching for solutions not problems?
Can you see the determination,
The conscientiousness, the avid curiosity
of life beneath the surface?
A photograph
cannot divulge all that is me.

Untitled

Neal Phillips

'Twas the night before the first day
Of school for little Ed,
And he could hardly wait as he lay in his bed!

Kinda...

"I really hate school," he thought to himself.
He wasn't ready to go, to take on everyone else.

When morning finally came, Ed was slow out the door.
He didn't want to get there, to see what was in store.

You see Ed was a veteran of Walnut Grove,
He had started seventh grade there,
About a year ago.

But Ed hadn't liked school
Except to see his friends,
"These lectures are boring!" Ed had thought.
"Will they ever end?"

"My classes are always
The same drab stuff.
Can't the teachers see
That I've had enough?"

"I don't want more exercises
Or problems that don't agree.
And why am I called "remedial"
Are some kids better than me?"

As Eddie then approached
His non-beloved middle school
He became his own Parliament
And enacted a self-rule:

"If there's one thing annoying,
And I'm given any flack,
I'm leaving Walnut Grove and I'm never coming back!"

Finally, Eddie was there
Outside Walnut Grove's doors
And after chatting with some friends
He went inside for some more...

And immediately upon entering
The welcoming hall,
Ed's mouth dropped a foot as he stood there in awe.

A bunch of kids were gathered around
A giant hanging screen,
It hung above them,
For everyone to see.

The caption said "Live" as the broadcast was shown
That Bill Gates guy was talking, with a casual tone.

He was answering questions
That the students would shout out
And Eddie wondered,
"What's this all about?"

Eddie weaved through the crowd
Took a right down the hall
Went and found his homeroom
And sat down for the role.

But immediately afterward
It wasn't straight to class,
But instead to an assembly,
A giant meeting of the mass.

All the teachers got on stage
And said "Hello", one by one.
They said a little about themselves

And looked like they were having fun.

Then they asked the students
What they wanted to learn this year.
"What I want to learn!!" Eddie thought, This
was music to Eddie's ears.

Eddie raised his hand high,
With the rest of the class.
And was called on rather rapidly,
(This encourages kids to ask...!)

After the assembly,
It was off to English again
Today, school wasn't so boring,
But Eddie was sure it would end.

Eddie got to his classroom,
But then thought he was mistaken,
He couldn't be in the same class... with Bobby Aiken.

Everyone knew
That Bobby was smart.
He always had hard classes, higher English, and Art.

But there Bobby was,
And other smart kids, too.
Eddie thought to himself,
"Gee, this is really new!"

Everyone was together,
No remedial stuff,
Walnut Grove was changing,
Getting rid of the fluff.

Eddie sat in his chair
That was in the same boring row,
But almost immediately Mrs. Shaw said, "Let's go!"

"Let's change this room, please
In an orderly fashion,
No more chairs in these rows
Or learning just won't happen!"

Eddie was delighted
And the other kids too,
Walnut Grove was vibrant, exciting, and new...

Cooperative learning, whole language,
All were let loose.
Walnut Grove's populace was free of the noose.

With an end to alienation,
All were together.
Bobby Aiken helped Eddie;
Cooperation works for the better.

EPILOGUE:

I could go on
With countless tales of success
Walnut Grove had uncovered the curriculum,
And eliminated the duress.

Ole' Eddie Mundt became a leader in that school,
Colleges and universities could hardly contain their drool.

And it didn't take much to turn things around
Just a little flexibility and keys to minds had been found.

So all of you teachers, students, and the like
That are stumbling and dragging through school as you might,

Take heed of this story, see what it's about
There are lots of ideas, to expand on, and try out.

If we all come together,
And help each other's needs,
The sky will always be the limit,
And anything can be achieved.

our strange meeting

mark wydareny

in the dreams of last night i groped;
searching for the path to gain your attention,
fumbling to articulate the things i hope to share,
and forging words into questions that tomorrow i need to ask.
in those dark thoughts you interrogated my abilities to understand you.
well you should - i nary know myself and my holsters hold no answers.
today we return nonetheless, for this is what we choose to do.

i realize that life is becoming complicated,
as it careens beyond your control.
you've little use for what i have to say,
and even less patience for what i have to ask.
my questions pale in the presence of yours unspoken.
with every passing day after we have parted,
things happen in your life of which i know nothing:
emotions hopes and terrors collide - their ruins awakening
yet another formidable question.
what you neglect to see is the relevance between the two.
should you listen closely,
you might find that the questions i present to you...in here
are merely the children of the ones which stalk you...out there.
in our closely confined attempts to befriend the tiny progeny,
lay the tools to tame the ferocious parents.

just yesterday, i am certain that i heard the creaking of your callow brain
tirelessly chasing the adult body in which it resides.
your exterior is often beguiling to both of us.
just now as you breathed, i observed an abnormal expansion of your chest.
it grows to accommodate the thickening shell encasing your heart
in a tragic act of self-preservation.
as i poked about in search of a hidden tender spot,
you giggled 'cuz it tickled.
last week you hurt me because i pressed that spot too hard.
up until this moment, you ignored me in punishment as a result.
today, right now, we must vow to trust one another.
one day on the horizon, perhaps you will remember me for my persistence.
i fear leaving some indelible mark upon your youth.
never forget that i fully realize your frailties, as they were once my own.
my open shirt would reveal to you the white scars, deep and fallow.
a number of the pink scars you yourself should recognize;
they very much resemble words and actions you have inflicted.
for some reason, perhaps humility, i have never told you
of the things you have shown me.
they weigh far heavier than you could imagine.

why then, today, have we again come here in this strange meeting?
we have, after all, a choice. it is we who direct the soles which brought us together.
beyond the obvious, perhaps there lies an infinitely more complicated explanation.
its slippery surface always repels words.
for reasons elusive & unspoken,
it is my belief that
we need
one
another.

5.1.95

Books Worth A Look

Crafting A Life in Essay, Story, Poem. Donald Murray. 1997. Boynton/Cook Publishers (361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801, USA). ISBN 0-8670-9403-6. Softcover. 165pp. US$19.00

Reviewed by David Morris

Language to the writer is clay in the hands of a potter. A dozen different vases may be enfolded in one block of clay, but not one can be realized until the potter dirties his hands. Craftsmanship requires technique, discipline, and vision, but it always begins with effort. In *Crafting A Life in Essay, Story, Poem*, Donald Murray puts it matter-of-factly: "[T]he rear end is the writing muscle."

Murray's book reads like hallowed advice from a sage. In 160 pages, he takes the reader through the mind of the writer from the alarm clock to the night-light. He begins with the one dozen reasons why he writes, including self-discovery, catharsis, revenge, and generosity. The six chapters that follow illustrate the craftsmanship that characterizes the best writing. Discipline, voice, and vision shine through as the essential qualities of the writer, regardless of genre. The essay, the story, and the poem each receive a chapter from Murray, whose vast experience demonstrates expertise in all three areas.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of the book is Murray's generous use of anecdotes and advice from other writers. The need to develop a writing habit is illustrated in a passage from Anthony Trollope's journals: "It has . . . become my custom . . .to write with my watch before me, and to require from myself 250 words every quarter of an hour." Discussing inspiration, Murray quotes Donald Barthelme: "Write about what you're most afraid of." A sense of camaraderie with other writers comes through in the book, much to the effect of a craftsmen's guild.

Murray's audience is clearly the community of aspiring writers. He does not explicitly address the need for children to write; yet, his advice seems compelling to writers of all ages. For example, he not only discusses revision, but he also provides his own first drafts with edits. He shares techniques for starting a poem that could be implemented in any classroom. For fiction, he suggests thinking in scenes, which he illustrates by providing commentary in the margins of an original story. The astute teacher of writing can capitalize on a wealth of ideas in this slim book.

Murray spends the final pages of the book on getting published. This, too, may have application in the classroom, especially at the high school level. Several journals publish high school students' writing, but most students are not aware of them. Murray's suggestions are exciting, and students would stand only to be empowered by writing for publication. Of course, we would too.

Authorizing Readers. Peter J. Rabinowitz and Michael W. Smith. 1998. Teachers College Press (1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10027, USA) and the National Council of Teachers of English (USA). ISBN 0-8077-3689-9 (paper), ISBN 0-8077-3690-2 (cloth). Softcover. 174 pp. US$21.95.

Reviewed by Howard R. Hyde

Authorizing Readers, Rabinowitz and Smith attempt to bridge the gap between literary theory and academic research on the psychology of reading and practical applications by teachers of such theory in the classroom. Rabinowitz, a professor of comparative literature at Hamilton College, concerns himself with clarifying and answering the questions

of how readers read and how teachers may improve student reading skills through the fostering of mastery of textual mechanics. Smith, who teaches at Rutgers University's Graduate School of Education, incorporates Rabinowitz and other's theories into a pedagogical paradigm centered on the engagement of student readers in mutual transactions with each other and the presented texts. Smith elaborates by demonstrating how the close reading techniques described by play between students, their peers, their instructors and presented texts. He supports his assertions through the citation of actual classroom experiences where the methods Rabinowitz describes were employed.

Instructors and scholars at the secondary level may find the complexity of the theories Rabinowitz explores and the directions in which Smith takes them difficult to adapt to the concerns and limitations of the secondary classroom. However, careful study of *Authorizing Readers* by college instructors will find many useful tools and options for assisting students to recognize and overcome difficulties in reading engagement, comprehension, and written discourse on assigned readings where such responses are required. For such applications, Rabinowitz and Smith adeptly delineate and disseminate the theoretical constructs underlying their discussion. They clarify their points, offer practical suggestions to strengthen preexistent teaching styles, and present useful strategies to modify such adapted instructional methods to meet the needs of students of various reading and learning levels.

As a beginning teacher in the language arts, *Authorizing Readers* offers a useful discourse on how what often appear to be incompatible approaches to the teaching of reading can be reconciled in an appropriate and practical fashion. While much of what Rabinowitz and Smith touch upon are not new, they draw upon one another's findings and experiences, and eventually reach a intellectual and academic accord, refreshing in a text on this subject. Obviously, both Rabinowitz and Smith have learned much from their investigations and have been able to practice what they preach in *Authorizing Readers*.

Making the Journey: Being and Becoming a Teacher of English Language Arts. Leila Christenbury. 1994. Boynton/Cook Publishers (361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801, USA). ISBN 0-86709-333-1. Softcover. 236pp. US$27.00.

Reviewed by Donna Horcick

A beginning English teacher has a tough job. It is exciting, fun, and challenging to work with teenagers, but there are negative characteristics as well, such as rapid hormonal changes, moodiness, and passionate outbursts of temper. A wise professor in my undergraduate work advised us to learn not to take crude or disrespectful remarks personally because they indicated a rebellious attitude directed to adult authority in general. Christenbury states that, more than anything, adolescents want to share a piece of the control. She shares some observations about teens and encourages us to try to remember what it was like when we were adolescents, to empathize with their self-centeredness and preoccupation with their social life.

In chapter four, *Teaching Literature*, Christenbury lists the characteristics of a reader-response classroom. I was quite surprised to learn that my teaching style seemed to have many of these characteristics. I did not make a conscious decision to teach that way, but I found that it seems to work for the students and me. This philosophy certainly lends itself to the study and discussion of literature because it allows everyone to personalize and take ownership of the material. Christenbury reminds us that reading aloud to students is not just for elementary students. In the section, *If they can 't — or won 't — read it*, she lists the benefits of hearing literature. She emphasized that reading aloud adds to the drama of the literature and imbues it with an impact and power that only a single, sustained reading can provide. I was thrilled to see that she too read most of the Edgar Allan Poe short stories to her students. Last year I read most of *The Black Cat* and *The Pit and the Pendulum* to my students, partly because they were having trouble with the difficult

vocabulary, and partly because of tight time constraints near the Thanksgiving holidays. They enjoyed studying Poe, and they were able to appreciate and analyze the literary elements of his works. I wholeheartedly concur with her sentiments about literature: "If you really don 't like a piece of literature — and this is particularly true of poetry — you probably shouldn't teach it" (142). She emphasizes that enthusiasm for a piece of literature is contagious, but cautions us that the reverse is also true.

Throughout the book Christenbury shares her passion for teaching. She describes it as a marriage of soul and mind, a consuming and deeply satisfying profession. She continually questions us, encouraging us to clarify our motivation of why we are getting into this business of teaching. She cautions us to understand and accept that there will be bitter and frustrating disappointments in our work. I agree with her that teaching is some of the most important work in the world. It has helped me to grow as a person and it has redefined my life. Since I've been teaching, I have come to realize that I'm excited about each new day in the classroom and the challenges I'll encounter in my interaction with students and the literature. Like Leila Christenbury, I too hope that as I make my journey, I become a better teacher and a better human being.

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Great Beginnings: Reflections and Advice for New English Language Arts Teachers and the People Who Mentor Them. Edited by Ira Hayes. 1998. National Council of Teachers of English (1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL, 61801-1096, USA). ISBN 0-8141-1888-7. Softcover. 195 pp. US$ 25.95.

Reviewed by Pauline M. Williams

As the title *Great Beginnings* indicates, the text is a reflection on the varied beginnings of English teachers from novice to expert. NCTE Advisory committee member, veteran teacher, and editor, Ira Hayes, has thoughtfully blended the experiences of over twenty-five English teachers to create this groundbreaking volume sponsored by the Conference on English Leadership (CEL). The CEL is an organization within the National Council of Teachers of English composed of English department leaders and educators dedicated to the development of teacher programs and teacher training. As the first book in the series, *Great Beginnings* candidly speaks to new teachers of English and challenges expert teachers to assume the role of mentor.

As a prospective English teacher, I was drawn to the anecdotal charm of the contributing authors as they told stories of beginning days long ago. Tales of the good, the bad, and the confused are woven through the text alongside heartfelt and thoughtful advice for survival. The idealism of the student teacher is described, then put into perspective by the sound of the first period bell. It is encouraging to realize that most new teachers are idealistic and terrified at the same time. The text outlines many ways to ease the transition from student to teacher, but none is encouraged more than a mentor program.

Novice teachers and experts alike sang the praises of the mentor teacher. In what sounds like a call to action, the book summons the strength of the mentor teacher documenting experience as evidence. The text states that 35-50 percent of new teachers leave the profession in their first five to seven years. *Great Beginnings* reads as a challenge to experts in the field

to assume the responsibility of saving new teachers through a mentoring program that is necessary for the development of the profession.

The voice of experience guides the reader through *Great Beginnings* from cover to cover. The importance of this book is realized when the reader understands the voice is doing more than telling a story. The stories have grown into building blocks of knowledge that translate to life saving advice on the page. Novice teachers as well as experts can take this advice and use it creatively to advance the development of English teachers in the profession.

Shakespeare Among Schoolchildren: Approaches for the Secondary Classroom. Mary Ann Rygiel. 1992. National Council of Teachers of English (1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801, USA). ISBN 0-8141-4381-4. Softcover. 135 pp. US$16.95.

Reviewed by Kimberly M. Vucic

Mary Anne Rygiel, in her book *Shakespeare Among Schoolchildren*, offers secondary teachers a light in the dark and endless tunnels of scholarly resesarch on William Shakespeare and the Ellizabethan Era. She guides teachers through valid lesson ideas that relate the Elizabethans to the students of today in an enjoyable and motivating way. Teachers will find this book helpful, not only for its ideas on classroom activities, but also for its vast background information of the life and times of Shakespeare, information that could only be compiled after years of research.

The major emphasis for this book lies in defining Shakespeare not alone, but as a writer during the Elizabethan times. Rygiel feels that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the historical context of Shakespeare in order to truly understand and value the writing. By exploring the society, teachers can relate occurrences then with occurrences now, so that students can feel a connection with the text, thereby losing some of their fears about reading Shakespeare.

Rygiel's authority comes not only from being a classroom teacher, but also from her personal studies on Elizabethan theater. She has published numerous times in English, education, and on Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Victorian literatures. As she moves through the book, she offers valuable insight into the English classroom, sharing student opinions and comments on the texts and criticism of them. Her experience has clearly shaped the tone of these lessons, requiring cooperative learning techniques and heavy student involvement.

Ryiel also addresses controversial issues regarding Shakespeare and uses the controversy to create learning activities. Since many students are aware that some controversy exists over the authorship of Shakespeare's works, she suggests lessons which open students up to the concept of editing manuscripts, enabling them to draw their own inferences on the works in question. This activity, although challenging sometimes to a teacher, allows students hands-on learning and supports recent theory on developing critical thinking skills in our students.

The only drawback to this book is in the abundance of the material Rygiel covers and the lack of organization surrounding it. In order to associate all the material with student learning, historical tidbits are randomly selected, with little depth, and placed amidst other, more general information. At times the reader loses track of the original concepts, and begins to meld information incorrectly together. The author also tends to use out-dated scholarly texts due to newer research and discoveries in the last two decades.

Overall, the book makes teachers take a deeper look at Shakespeare, how they teach his works, and how they can improve their lessons for more effective learning strategies. For the novice teacher of Shakespeare, Rygiel offers many sources of information that provide a great starting place for further research. By focusing on what can be done with the difficult and overwhelming works of Shakespeare, instead of what is not done, Rygiel provides solace for the already busy English teachers.

Go Public! Encouraging Student Writers to Publish. Susanne Rubenstein. 1998. National Coucil of Teachers of English (1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801, USA). ISBN 0-8141-1862-3. Softcover. 221pp. US$30.90.

Reviewed by Jessica Bauer

If you're looking for a new philosophy on how to teach writing, *Go Public!* is the place you will find it. Susanne Rubenstein beings her year by telling her students, "I am not your audience," and propels her students into thinking about their writing with a wider audience in mind. Insightful and informative, *Go Public!* provides the groundwork for anyone interested in changing or improving on the way they teach writing.

Many books stress the importance of reader-response groups, the value of peer and self-evaluations, and the necessity of helping students create the connections between school work and their own lives. The problem is that they do not tell you how to do it. Rubenstein devotes an entire section of her book to creating a community of writers. She provides practical ways to foster this environment in a variety of ways. From displaying students' work in the classroom and allowing other students to comment on writing they particularly like, to implementing a variety of thought-provoking activities, *Go Public!* provides step-by-step instruction and suggestions for transforming your classroom.

The author uses literature to approach writing, exploring tone and voice through applying classic writers' work to their own. She has her students write a description of something basic about the school and then asks them to write about the same thing through the voice of a famous writer, like Dickens. She uses examples from literature to demonstrate the importance of showing the reader instead of telling the reader.

Rubenstein provides an extensive list of self-evaluation questions as a launching point for further investigation. She provides examples of assignments she has given her students, starting them with a basic letter to someone they know, and eventually encourages them to submit a written piece for publication. Critics of her philosophy might say that she sets up her students for failure, but her goal is to instead make students realize that a rejection of a submitted piece is not a rejection of them.

Rubenstein seems to find ways to reach all students in her classroom one way or another and provides an example of how to do that in English classrooms. Although not explicitly said, the author seems to be a master at making connections for students between their lives and their schoolwork. She stresses telling and showing students that they are only competing against themselves in her classroom and striving to improve upon the work they have already done. She tells them from the beginning that she will view their work as a body of work, and that together with her, the students will come up with their final grade in the classroom. Besides all of the practical information she provides, her appendix to the book includes a complete list of possible publication opportunities, ranging from magazines and journals to contests offered every year.

Rubenstein makes it easy to adopt this philosophy of writing for publication in the classroom, and through *Go Public!* provides a way to succeed in creating an English classroom that is alive. She provides a multitude of activities and suggestions that can facilitate any teacher who is looking to reinforce or overhaul their own teaching philosophy. Go Public! leaves no stone unturned in the author's description of English students striving for publication, and it does so in an interesting and thought-provoking manner.

The Performance of Self in Student Writing. Thomas Newkirk. 1997. Boynton/Cook Publishers (361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801-3912) ISBN 0-86709-439-7. Softcover. 124 pp. US $21.95

Reviewed by Josh M. Slifkin

It is not unusual for teachers to ask students to write reflectively. It is also not unusual for students to turn in self-reflective writing even if it was not

specifically assigned. Thomas Newkirk's text examines this practice, stressing how educators should look at this writing not as unacademic and unconnected, but as a form of creative and personal growth. *The Performance of Self in Student Writing* is a web of student and teacher narratives that the author hopes will show how this revealing and personal writing style can and should be viewed as a plausible writing choice.

Newkirk, who is a professor of English at the University of New Hampshire, and author of *Taking Stock: The Writing Process Movement in the 90s* (Boyton/Cook, 1994), presents a well-constructed argument that provides examples of how and why such self- reflective writing—what he calls performative writing—is a necessary factor in today's composition courses. The author bases his argument on Goffman's (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Newkirk successfully blends his own experiences in teaching composition with both contemporary and historical accounts of personal narratives as academic texts.

The author points out that, though unsettling at times, reflective writing can be freeing to its author. Though such writing may go against what culture has adopted as acceptable—something that can be easily assessed with a grade—it is nevertheless a wondrous tool for getting many students to find a writing voice when no other means may exist. Newkirk responds to critics who deem this act of writing as purely therapeutic by stating that writing as therapy actually helps to validate its cause. For the author, writing that can be interpreted, challenged, and deconstructed, can also be responded to, critiqued and graded. Writing-the-self gains its normalcy in the very act which many critics find fault.

Newkirk's book also argues that reflective writing begins with a sense of moral responsibility. In such writing, the self-reflective student desires to come out of the experience a changed, even better, person. He notes that critics also claim that a narrative writing of the self is "oblivious to communal responsibility . . . private, not engaged with the world." Instead, Newkirk states that this writing possesses a romantic ideal, one which goes against the tenets of modernism's New Critical call for "emotional displacement." Instead of distancing the writer from the text, the self-reflection expresses his or her emotion quite candidly. What is most important is not only the world around him or her, but also the writer's complex relationship with that outside world.

Finally, Newkirk introduces the postmodern perspective to the act of reflective writing. The author is both engaged by and troubled with how the field of cultural studies has both defined and bound the act of self-writing. Newkirk finds postmodernist assertions of never-ending relationships of resistance and critique a "too austere, and monolithic view of culture." At the same time, he also agrees with the postmodern argument that language—especially that of students' writing—is inescapably colored by social factors, multiple meanings, and individual prejudices. Writing is always a performative act. Like the writing he studies throughout the book, Newkirk is not content to categorize his theory into a neat package. It is a narrative account of many other narratives. As you read the text, you can almost see the author's world grow up around you. This is a book that actually practices what it preaches.

The Performance of Self in Student Writing is a long-awaited study of the applications and effectiveness of personal writing in the classroom. Newkirk's text is both challenging and enjoyable. He has written a revealing book about the revealing writing students give their teachers, whether asked for or not.